Oct. 3, 1988

THE NEW YORKER

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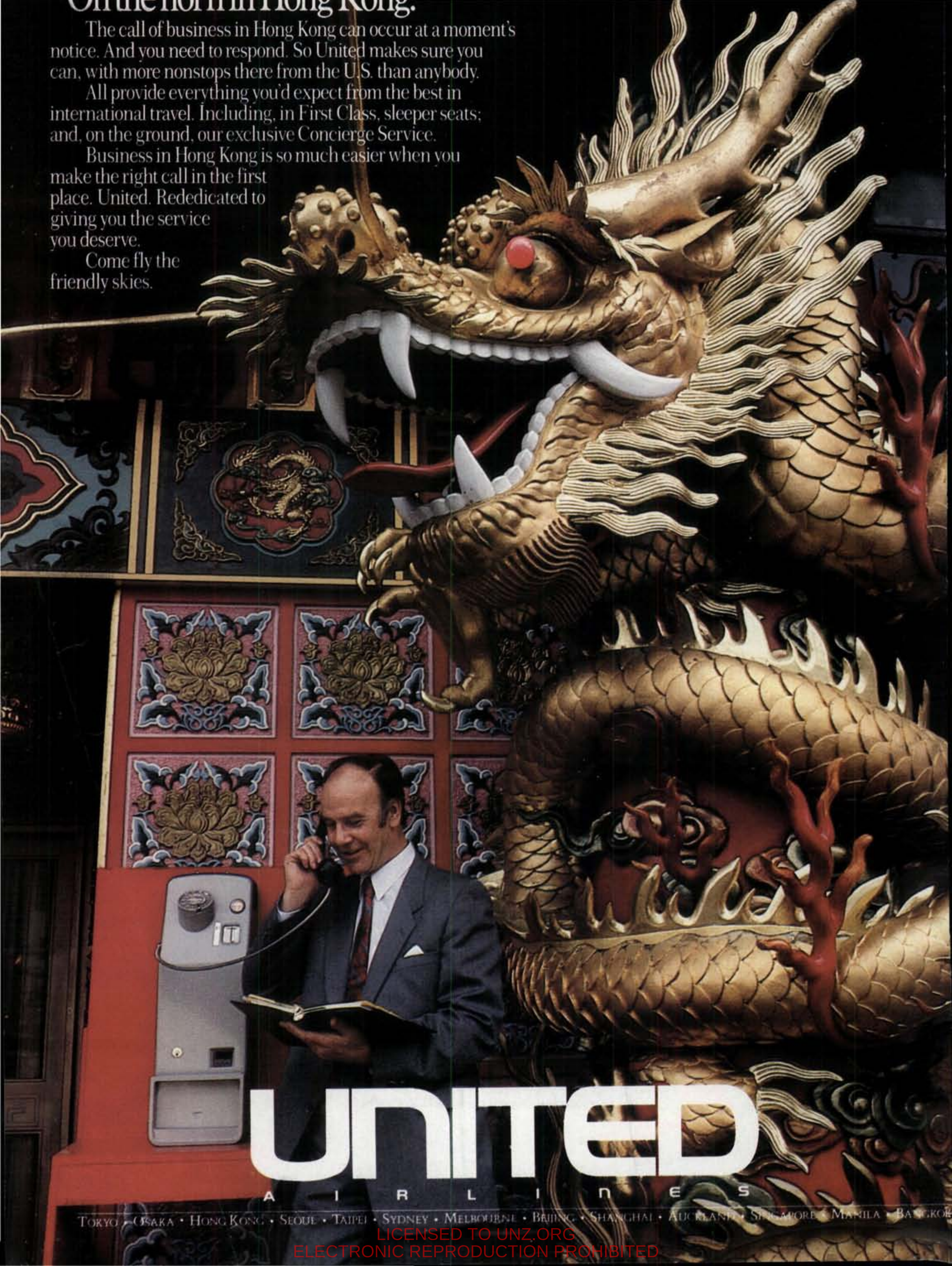

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THE NEW YORKER

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Ain't Misbehavin'—A revival, after ten years, of this celebration of the music and the comic spirit of Fats Waller, in all its beauty and variety, as conceived and directed by Richard Maltby, Jr. The members of the original company are present and just as dynamic as they were the first time around. They are Nell Carter, Andre De Shields, Armelia McQueen, Ken Page, and Charlaine Woodard. The invaluable (and protean) Luther Henderson, conductor and arranger, again presides at the piano. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/5/88.) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 3.)

Blues in the Night—Carol Woods, Brenda Pressley, Leilani Jones, and Lawrence Hamilton appear as residents of a cheap hotel, presumably in Chicago, in this recital of blues and popular songs, many of them from the thirties. All the singers are good, Miss Woods especially so. (9/26/88) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Checkmates—Ron Milner's "domestic comedy," about an older couple who lease the apartment above them to a recently married young couple, should be more entertaining than it is. There are some funny moments, though, and the performances are distinguished. The actors are Ruby Dee and Paul Winfield (downstairs) and Denzel Washington and Marsha Jackson (upstairs). Woodie King, Jr., directed. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Circle Repertory Company—A comedy by Craig Lucas, **reckless**, is the first production of the season. Directed by Norman René. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

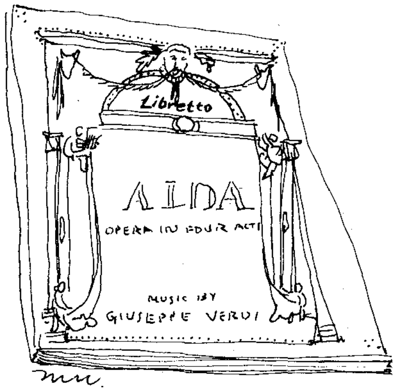
Equity Library Theatre—A revival of **the male animal**, a 1940 comedy by James Thurber and Elliott Nugent, will be the first in this season's series of eight productions. Opens Thursday, Sept. 29, and will run through Sunday, Oct. 16. (103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

Forbidden Broadway 1988—The funniest show in town is a cluster of parodies of other shows along the Great White Way, as conceived by Gerard Alessandrini, who directed it and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Roxie Lucas, David B. McDonald, and Michael McGrath—inspired mimics all. (9/26/88) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8:30; Saturdays at 7:30 and 10:30; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3:30.)

Godspell—A revival of the 1971 musical by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Grandma Plays—Renée Taylor and Elzbieta Czyzewska in a comedy by Todd Graff. (Vineyard Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 683-0696. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Oct. 16.)

M. Butterfly—David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play is based on an actual case. A French diplomat takes as his mistress a star of the Beijing Opera, and some twenty years later—when they are both charged with being spies—discovers that "she" is a he. David Dukes is the diplomat; B. D. Wong is exceptional as his lover. Lori Tan Chinn and George N. Martin give them sound support. (4/4/88) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)



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A Murder of Crows—Kim Hunter and Michael Higgins in a new play by Ed Graczyk. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Wednesdays through Sundays at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Oct. 16.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting **from the mississippi delta**, an ingenious play by Endesha Ida Mae Holland that, in a kind of dramatic collage, traces the life of a young woman from the fifties to the eighties. Brenda Denmark, LaTanya Richardson, and Gwen Roberts-Frost, three mettlesome actresses, portray her and an assortment of other characters, male and female. (9/5/88) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Wednesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2:30.)

Paul Robeson—This stirring production of Phillip Hayes Dean's biographical drama was seen in August at the South Street Theatre and has now moved to Broadway. Avery Brooks, the sole actor present, gives a performance that far transcends impersonation, and Ernie Scott is a strong presence at the piano. Herb Downer substitutes for Mr. Brooks at the Wednesday and Saturday matinées. Preview Tuesday, Sept. 27. Opens officially on Wednesday, Sept. 28. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; opening-night curtain at 6:15. Matinées Wednesdays, except Sept. 28, and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Romance/Romance—A pair of charming one-act musicals. Scott Bakula and Alison Fraser are as romantic as required in the leading roles. (Mr. Bakula leaves the cast after Sunday, Oct. 2; his replacement is to be announced.) Barry Harman wrote the clever books and lyrics, and Keith Herrmann wrote the engaging scores. Mr. Harman directed. (5/16/88) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Speed-the-Plow—David Mamet's satire on Hollywood is just as scathing, just as acute as his "Glengarry Glen Ross," and even funnier, if that can be imagined. With David Rasche, Bob Balaban, and Felicity Huffman; directed by Gregory Mosher. (5/16/88) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Taffetas—A revue of songs from the early fifties. Four female singers reprise the hits of Rosemary Clooney, Jo Stafford, the Lennon Sisters, and others. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Tartuffe and **Romeo and Juliet**—Two works in repertory, presented by the RAPP Theatr Company. Molière's **tartuffe** plays Tuesday Thursday, and Saturday evenings. **romeo an juliet** plays Wednesday and Friday evening and the Saturday matinée. (St. Clement' 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Evenings at Matinée at 2. Closes Saturday, Oct. 1.)

Without You I'm Nothing—Sandra Bernhard i a one-woman show. (Orpheum, 126 Secon Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. Wednesday an Thursday at 8; Friday and Saturday at 8 an 10:30; and Sunday at 5:30 and 9. Closes Sur day, Oct. 2.)

Young Playwrights Festival—The seventh editio of this annual event is the best of the lot. Th three prize-winning dramatists whose work i here produced—Robert Kerr, Jonathan Mar Sherman, and Eric Ziegenhagen—are still i their teens, and their one-acters show cor siderably more than just promise. (Reviewe in this issue.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W 42nd St. 279-4200. Tuesdays, except Sep 27, through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Satur days at 3 and Sundays at 2. Closes Saturday Oct. 8.)

Long Runs—**anything goes:** This exuberant re vival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porte himself. The company, which includes Bi McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, Patti LuPon Anthony Heald, and Kathleen Mahony-Ben nett, does more than justice to the words an score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Cente 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at and Sundays at 3.) . . . **burn this:** A play b Lanford Wilson, with Scott Glenn as a fou mouthed restaurant manager who woos an wins his dead brother's dancing partne (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-620 Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matiné Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **cat** Ezra Pound nicknamed T. S. Eliot "Old Pos sum," and under that name Eliot wrote a co lection of poems about cats, and now the cat are on display on Broadway, with music b Andrew Lloyd Webber, scenery and costum by John Napier, and direction by Trev Nunn. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th S 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2 . . . **a chorus line:** A group of young dance audition for a handful of chorus jobs in show not yet in rehearsal, and by the tim the evening is over we know everything abou all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 23 6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Mat nées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . **driving miss daisy:** Frances Sternhagen an Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's pla which tells of the growing attachment of cranky old woman in Atlanta to her blac chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsin (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-803 Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matiné Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sur days at 3.) . . . **the fantasticks:** This longest long runs recently had its twenty-eight birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 18 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tue days through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sur days at 3.) . . . **42nd street:** Once upon a tim there was a silly-wonderful Warner Brothe musical about a young hoofer who goes on i place of a disabled star and herself becomes star overnight. The legitimate musical th has been fashioned from the movie musical i just as silly but by no means as wonderfu (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tue days through Saturdays at 8:15. Matinée Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:15, and Sun days at 3.) . . . **frankie and johnny in the cla de lune:** Bonnie Franklin and Tony Musant in Terrence McNally's enchanting comed about sex and the sudden onset of love in a apartment on Tenth Avenue. (Westside Arts 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays throug Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3. . . . **into the woods:** This musical by Stephe Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt t show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. Directed by Mr. Lapine. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **jackie mason's "the world**

ACCORDING TO ME!": The comedian's one-man show. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Wednesdays through Saturdays, and Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, except Sept. 28, at 2 and Sundays at 3; special matinée Saturday, Oct. 1, at 2.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** A fifty-year-old British musical starring Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Tim Shew and Norman Large star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.) . . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **OIL CITY SYMPHONY:** Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Michelle Horman, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny musical. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **SARAFINA!:** This South African musical, an explosion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. The acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbaqanga, are a wonder. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **A SHAYNA MAIDEL:** A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STARLIGHT EXPRESS:** A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** The first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana, and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

Moscow Circus—Acrobats, clowns, trapeze artists, and skateboarding bears. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 8; Wednesdays at 2:30 and 8; and Saturdays and Sundays at 11, 2:30, and 7:30. Closes Sunday, Oct. 9.)

Calvin Trillin's Uncle Sam—The writer and humorist offering some commentary on the preëlection state of the union. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Monday, Sept. 26; Wednesday through Saturday, Sept. 28-Oct. 1; and Wednesday, Oct. 5, all at 8. Matinée Sunday, Oct. 2, at 3. Closes Sunday, Oct. 9.)

DANCE

Martha Graham Dance Company—Opening performances of a three-week engagement that will run through Sunday, Oct. 23—Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 7:30: "Diversion of Angels," "The Dying Swan" (with guest artist Maya Plisetskaya), "El Penitente" (with guest artist Mikhail Baryshnikov), and "Letter to the World" (with Kathleen Turner, narrator). . . . ¶ Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 8: "Seraphic Dialogue," excerpts from the repertory, and "Appalachian Spring." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989.)

José Greco—With his company of thirteen Spanish dancers, singers, and musicians. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Tuesday through Friday, Sept. 27-30, at 8; Saturday, Oct. 1, at 2 and 8; and Sunday, Oct. 2, at 2 and 7:30.)

Cynthia Gregory and Fernando Bujones—With an eleven-member company in a selection of pas de deux, two new ballets, and Act III of "Coppélia." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989. Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 7:30; Wednesday through Friday, Sept. 28-30, at 8; Saturday, Oct. 1, at 2 and 8; and Sunday, Oct. 2, at 3.)

Jubilation! Dance Company—In a single performance of contemporary dance. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Friday, Sept. 30, at 8.)

Rudolf Nureyev—With a group of dancers from the American Ballet Theatre in a program that includes "Apollon Musagete," "Songs of a Wayfarer," and "Two Brothers." (Lehman College Concert Hall, the Bronx. 960-8833. Saturday, Oct. 1, at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur markets. **BLOSSOM DEARIE,** whose voice is no bigger than a dainty child's and is just the right instrument for singing Dave Frishberg's "Peel Me a Grape" or Harry Richman's "Moonlight Saving Time," gives an early-bird show Wednesdays through Saturdays at six-thirty.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—A fledgling jazz operation that could easily be mistaken for a yuppie bar. The scenery includes waiters and waitresses in bowling shirts, some trees, and some nice-looking neon wading birds. South African trumpeter **HUGH MASEKELA,** singer **MIRIAM MAKEBA,** and members of the cast of "Sarafina!" give a benefit performance for the Harlem School of the Arts on Monday, Sept. 26; pianist **HAROLD DANKO** and his Steel Valley All-Stars have the floor on Wednesday, Sept. 28; **AKIRA TANA,** a drummer who has worked with Jim Hall and Art Farmer, leads a quartet on Thursday, Sept. 29; and a quintet run by Brazilian trumpeter **CLAUDIO RODITI** holds forth Friday and Saturday, Sept. 30-Oct. 1. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A long, narrow, bemirrored room with a piece of neon art on the back wall (the Manhattan skyline and attendant celestial bodies) and assorted starry and unstarry jazz people on the dais. The club has a souvenir stand, has published a swell souvenir booklet, and has recently gone into the franchising business; a Tokyo Blue Note opens later this fall. **PHYLLIS HYMAN,** a singer best known for her turn in the 1981 Broadway show "Sophisticated Ladies," performs Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 27-Oct. 2. **DAVE FRISHBERG,** now a resident of the green city of Portland, Oregon, sings his satirical songs ("Blizzard of Lies") and his light-blue love songs ("Sweet Kentucky Ham") on Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 4-5. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Bruce Springsteen played here in 1975 and, eyewitnesses say, just about blew the house down; Tony Bennett sang here in 1981; and Dan Hicks, the toast of the folk-swing circuit, spent a night here in 1987. ("Howdja hear about this?" Hicks asked the audience, a small one.) In between and since, big stars and little stars, people with interesting haircuts and people with no hair have come and gone. The other day, a college-age woman with a yellow Mohawk told us that a Philadelphia rock band called Tommy Conwell & the Young Rumblers was "really great," so we bought their new CBS record and put it on our Victrola and prepared to move our feet boogie-fashion; the music was standard-issue machosludge—baby-I'm-gonna-rock-you-all-night stuff—and it did not make our feet go. The Young Rumblers will be here Monday

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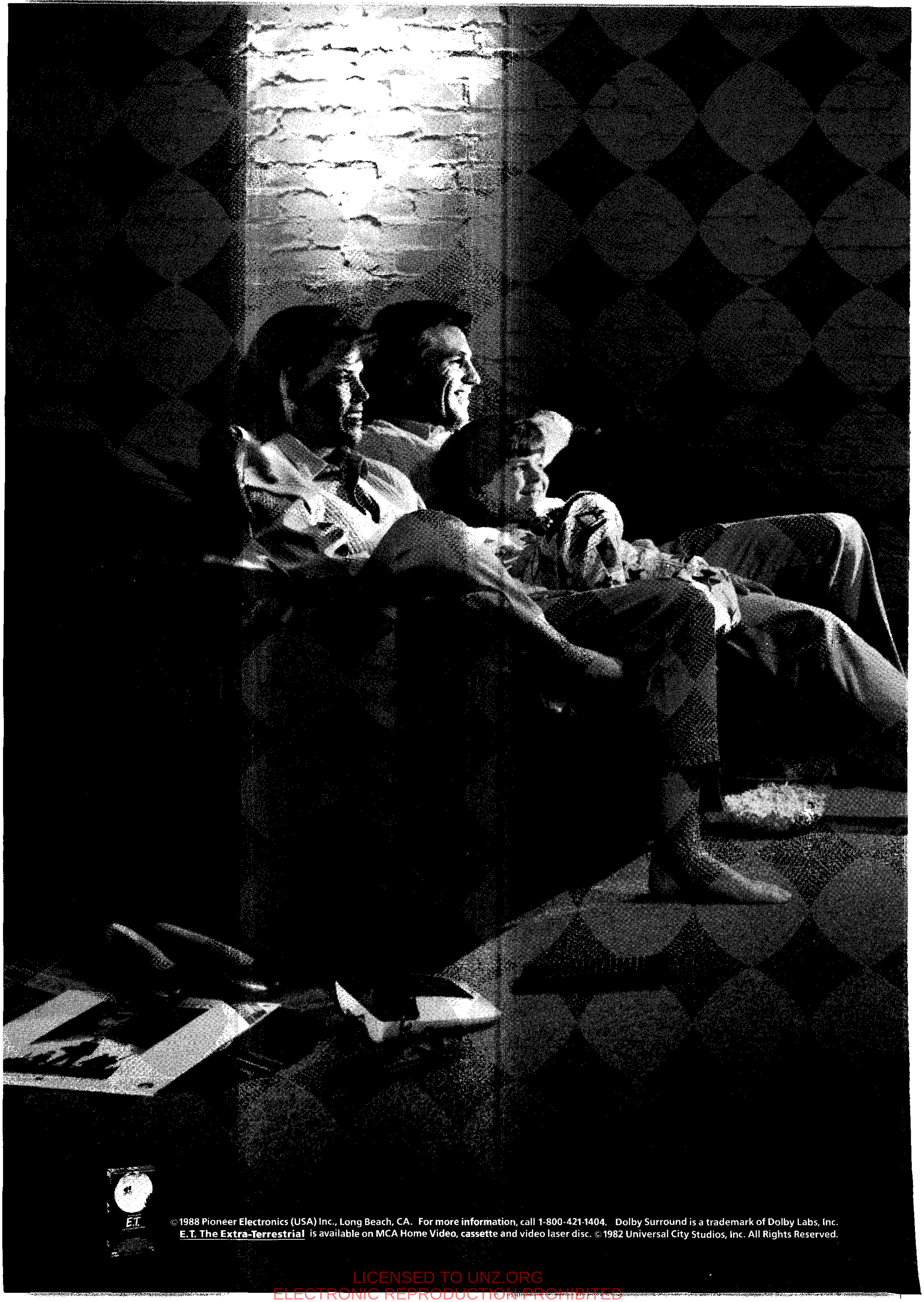

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

and Tuesday, Oct. 3-4. They'll be preceded by cool Oklahoma rock man **J. J. CALE** on Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 26-27, and by tenor saxophonist **MICHAEL BRECKER'S** band Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 29-Oct. 1. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A Village bar that has long featured first-rate piano-bass teams and pro conversationalists and that now also features Bradley's T-shirts, Bradley's sweatshirts, Bradley's customized coasters, a person to take an admission fee, and a person to seat you and shush you. It's an institution. **JIM MC NEELY** and **RAY DRUMMOND** work in tandem through Saturday, Oct. 1. Mr. Drummond, a bassist with a big, earthy sound, will be joined by **KENNY BARRON** on Sunday, Oct. 2, and by **TOMMY FLANAGAN,** one of the wonders of bop piano, starting Monday, Oct. 3. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—It's so nice in here—silken woodwork and long tables with pink tablecloths and pink napkins—you might mistake it for a jazz club on a movie set but for the real musicians onstage. **BENNY CARTER,** who turned eighty last year and whose alto-saxophone playing remains a model of old-time grace and swing, is here with a quartet Tuesdays through Sundays. Mondays are claimed by a foursome led by tenor saxophonist **BIG NICK NICHOLAS.** Music from nine-thirty. Dining.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—A red-velvet-and-mirror-walled lair that will seem intimate to some people and too intimate to tall people (who may want to remove their homburgs before entering). **RICHIE COLE,** a forty-year-old alto saxophonist descended from Charlie Parker by way of Phil Woods (with whom he apprenticed as a teen-ager), will be here Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 27-Oct. 2, with a combo that includes guitarist **VIC JURIS.** Mondays remain in the hands of guitarist **LES PAUL.** Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—Two nice things not known to be available in the next world—Chinese cooking and American jazz—are here, under a greenhouse roof, above which loom garden-variety skyscrapers. **ROGER KELLAWAY,** a pianist who is sometimes rhapsodic and sometimes rollicking (he uses his elbows to good percussive effect), works with bassist **MILT HINTON** Monday through Sunday, Sept. 26-Oct. 2. Music from nine-thirty Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

JAN WALLMAN'S, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A room fit for a singer, an accompanist or two, and a party of forty-eight. The thrushes: **RITA GARDNER** on Monday, Sept. 26; **CHARLOTTE CROSSLEY** (a former Bette Midler Harlette) Tuesday through Thursday, Sept. 27-29; and **JUDY KRESTON** on Saturday, Oct. 1. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A pleasant, low-key bar and restaurant in the piano-bass district. **BILL MAYS** and **JOHN GOLDSBY** are the pianist and the bassist Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 27-Oct. 1. The following nine nights belong to **HARRY CONNICK, JR.,** a young New Orleans-born pianist (Ellis Marsalis tutored him, and Delfeayo Marsalis produced his début LP) who plays Monk ("Blue Monk") and Rodgers and Hart ("Blue Moon") and blue Beatles ("Eleanor Rigby"), and occasionally, in a light, home-made voice, sings something like "When I Take My Sugar to Tea." Music from about nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music and performing space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. On Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 1-2, **MAL WALDRON** (piano), **RICHARD DAVIS** (bass), and **ED BLACKWELL** (drums) communicate with the spirits of Eric Dolphy and Booker Little; in July of 1961, the five of them played together at the Five Spot, an East Village hangout that was the Knitting Factory of its day. (Little died three months later, and Dolphy died three years later; the Five Spot survived into the seventies.) The rest of the lineup: Monday, Sept. 26, experimental guitarist **HENRY KAISER;** Wednesday, Sept. 28, **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS;** Thursday, Sept. 29, the **MICROSCOPIC SEPTET;** and Tuesday, Oct. 4, pianist **GERI ALLEN'S** group. Music after nine.

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LONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—Scary-movie buffs like the epic-size iguana on the roof; Texans like the reminders of home; and musicians like the Texans, the New Yorkers, and the other visitors from this planet who regularly fill the joint up. **DR. JOHN,** the paunchy New Orleans piano thumper and gravel-throated singer, will be here Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 27-28, knocking out his greatest hits and bunches of Gulf Coast R. & B. numbers; **KENNY NEAL,** a thirty-year-old bluesman who was born in New Orleans and grew up in Baton Rouge, is also on the bill. **LAZY LESTER,** another Louisiana bluesman (he's a contemporary of Neal's harmonica-playing daddy, Raful), with a sleepy-rough country voice, will be around on Monday, Oct. 3. Music after nine. Dining.

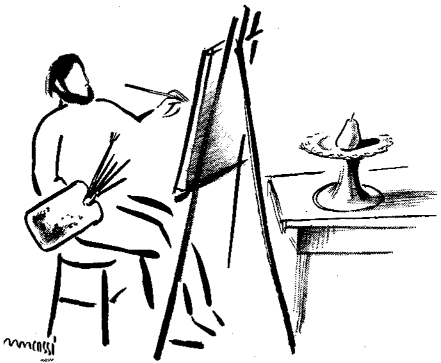
LONE STAR CAFÉ ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The midtown branch of the aforementioned honky-tonk. The façade is a Silver Eagle bus, the kind your itinerant musician tools around in. The inside is upscale roadhouse; it has a couple of postage-stamp dance floors and some real pretty Gibson guitars decorating the walls. **KINKY FRIEDMAN,** the Texas-born country singer and wise guy, will be here on Wednesday, Sept. 28, singing his satirical songs ("Sold American," "Nashville Casualty and Life") and peddling his books (he writes murder mysteries). **ROBERT GORDON,** a rockabilly devotee, comes in on Saturday, Oct. 1. Music after nine. Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Not far from this pub's gabbing, well-heeled crowds, **MEL TORMÉ,** who knows something like five thousand songs, sings a few of them in his serene, light-footed way. Shows at nine and eleven Tuesdays through Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—Jazz and jazz-enriched music (jazz-rock, Latin jazz, jazz-funk) to eat and drink to. Cuban conga drummer **DANIEL PONCÉ** heads up a band Friday and Saturday, Sept. 30-Oct. 1. Music from about ten until two. Dining.

RITZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Rock and roll of the Present Moment—and, occasionally, of the Classical Era (the fifties), the Romantic Era (the sixties), and the OPEC Era (the seventies)—in a big, fancy thirties-era ballroom. The **GODFATHERS,** five British lads who set grim little thoughts ("Birth, School, Work, Death" is their theme song) to hard rock, perform on Saturday, Oct. 1; **GRAHAM PARKER,** a hard case of the Elvis Costello generation, holds forth on Sunday, Oct. 2. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A musical melting pot: samba bands, African pop bands, reggae people, calypso bands, and salsa ensembles all pass through this former luncheonette. **MAX ROACH** and his all-percussion octet, **M'BOOM,** will be here Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 28-29, to prove that an old saw can be musical and that sticks and mallets striking gongs and marimbas and steel drums and temple blocks can bring down the house. **YOMO TORO,** who plays Puerto Rican hillbilly music on a ten-string guitarlike instrument called a cuatro, leads a band on Friday, Sept. 30. **STANLEY TURRENTINE,** a soul-jazz tenor saxophonist, brings a group here Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 4-5. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.



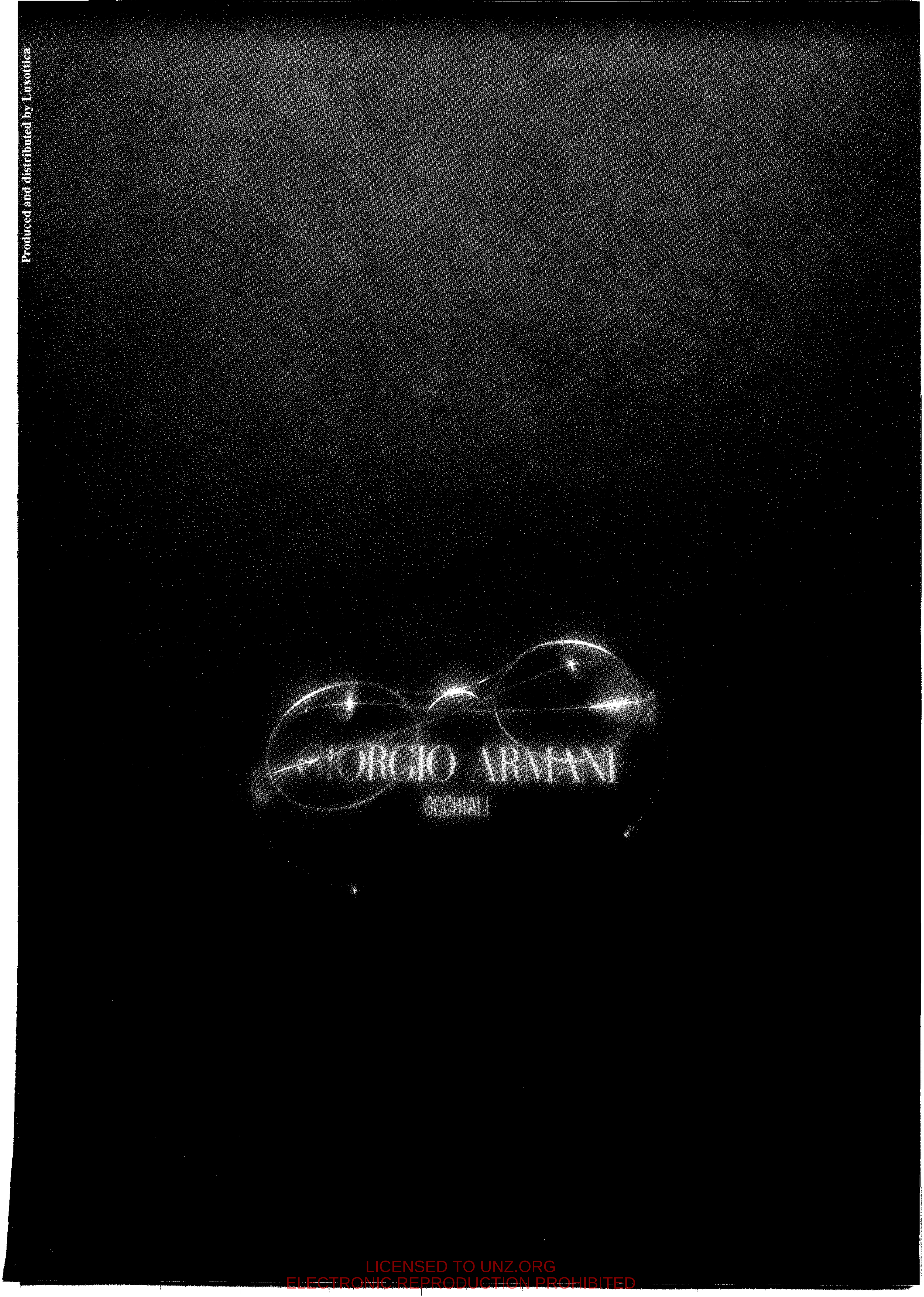
SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A knotty-pine-and-brick-walled *boîte,* crowded with jazz fans from Japan, France, Germany, Denmark, Greenwich Village, and other countries. **ART BLAKEY,** the old hard-bop kingpin long famous for his press rolls and for the musicians who have worked under him (Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, and Wynton Marsalis are among the trumpeters), will be here nightly through Monday, Oct. 3, with the current edition of his **JAZZ MESSENGERS. ART FARMER,** a flugelhornist with a gentle, decorous sound, brings in his quintet on Tuesday, Oct. 4. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, Mondays after nine are set aside for salsa bands. **SON SEALS,** a bang-up Chicago blues guitarist and singer, has the floor Friday and Saturday, Sept. 30-Oct. 1. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. **CHUCK MANGIONE,** a flugelhornist who was employed by Art Blakey in the sixties and has since wandered off into the fusion and pop fields, arrives with his group on Tuesday, Oct. 4. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the Terrace Bar, the piano-bass team of **JUNIOR MANCE** and **MARTY RIVERA** wind up a two-month residence on Sunday, Oct. 2. **BOB DOROUGH,** a twangy-voiced singer and bop-rooted pianist whose admirers and collaborators include Dave Frishberg (with whom he wrote "I'm Hip"), Blossom Dearie (with whom he has recorded duets, including a contemporary call-and-response number entitled "Answering Machine"), and Miles Davis (for whom he wrote a Christmas blues), will be around with bassist **BILL TAKAS** starting Tuesday, Oct. 4. On Tuesdays the visiting duo trades sets with jazz harpist **DAPHNE HELLMAN'S** trio. Music from ten.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Perhaps the most famous basement in the world, now in its second half century, this establishment has been described by Max Gordon, the wise, elfin, cigar-smoking proprietor, as "a good joint that people like to come to—thank God." **WYNTON MARSALIS,** the young trumpet star whose admirers rank him somewhere between Dizzy and Gabriel, leads a quintet Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 27-Oct. 2. The **MINGUS DYNASTY BAND,** a six-piece ensemble overseen by the bassist's widow and led by **JIMMY KNEPPER** (a trombonist who looks like a science teacher and plays like a wizard), performs the Master's music starting Tuesday, Oct. 4. Mondays are reserved for the **MEL LEWIS** big band. Music after ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—A Columbia University watering hole, with a room set aside for jazz scholars. In the seventies, it served as a home for famous elderly swing men; nowadays, most of the musicians are tenured professors of modernism. Two disciples of the reclusive pianist and composer Lennie Tristano, **CONNIE CROTHERS** (piano) and **LENNY POPKIN** (tenor saxophone), share a quartet Wednesday through Saturday, Sept. 28-Oct. 1. Music from about nine. Dining.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A bright, spacious, lightly forested bar and restaurant with an in-between room from which music issues, putting an end to some discussions and inspiring others. Pianist **KENNY BARRON** and bassist **STAFFORD JAMES** trade ideas through Saturday, Oct. 1; **GENE BERTONCINI** and **MICHAEL MOORE,** a quiet but intense guitar-bass team, play on Sunday, Oct. 2; and pianist **DICK KATZ**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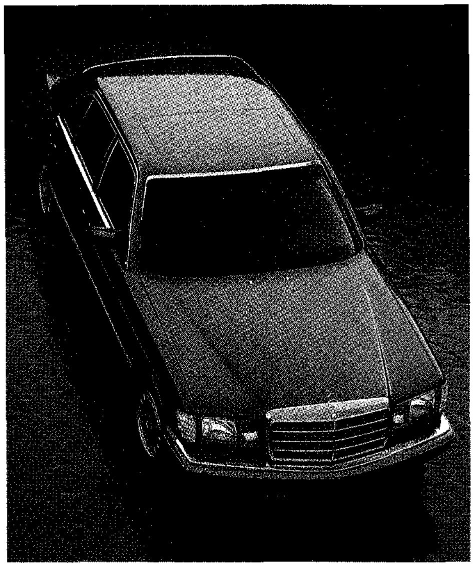

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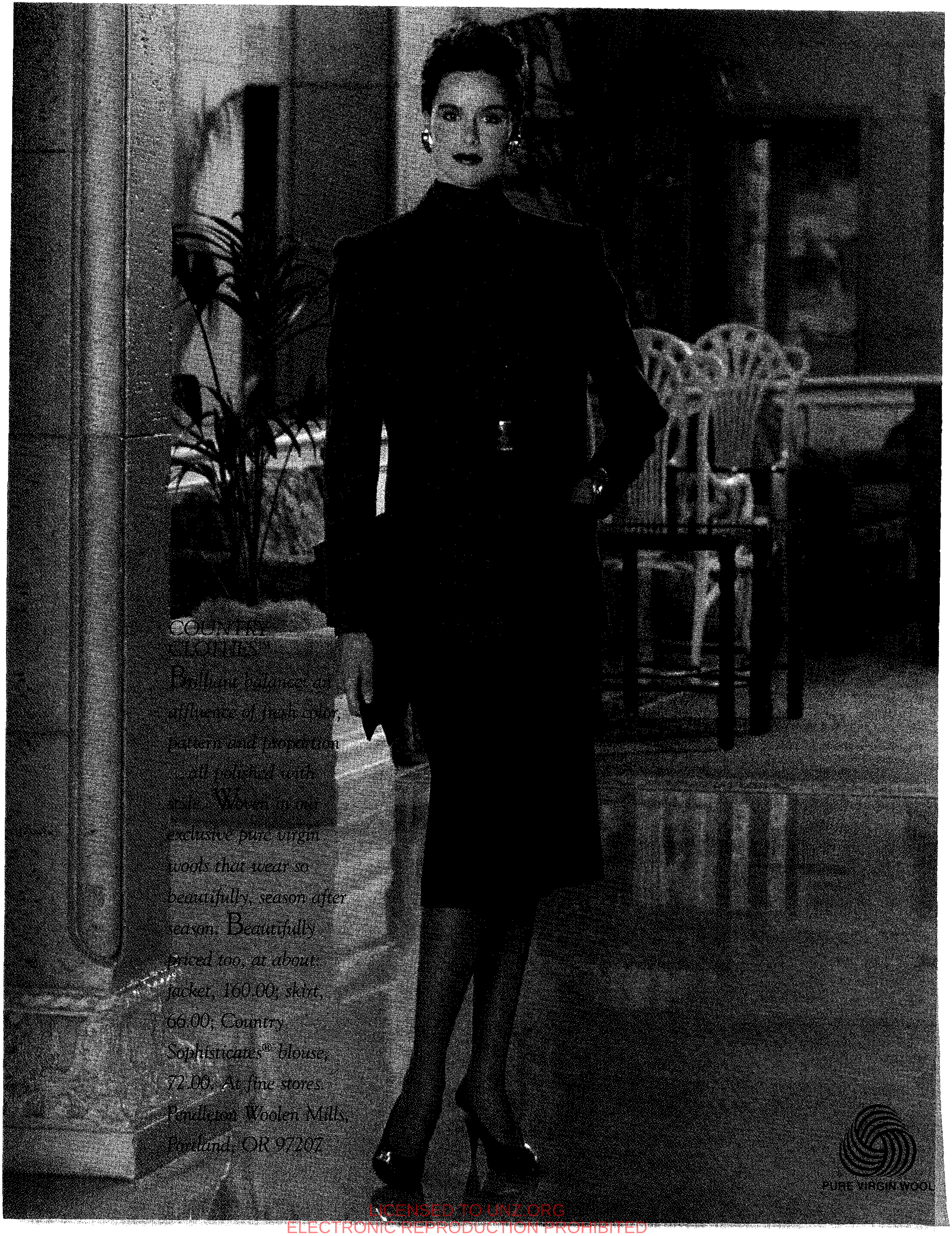

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PURE VIRGIN WOOL

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

joins Moore for six nights starting Monday, Oct. 3. Music from eight every night but Sunday, when it commences at seven.

JAZZ / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES / PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Rod Stewart—Madison Square Garden. 536-8300. Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 26-27, at 8.

Urban Bush Women—With Craig Harris and the Dirty Tones Band, Laurie Carlos, Jessica Hagedorn, and Robbie McCauley. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Wednesday through Sunday, Sept. 28-Oct. 2, at 8:30.)

Rachel Rosenthal—Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 29-Oct. 1, at 8, and Sunday, Oct. 2, at 3.

Lambs Eat Ivy—P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 29-Oct. 2, at 9:30.

Prince—Madison Square Garden. Sunday and Monday, Oct. 2-3, at 8.

Jackson Browne—In a benefit concert. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Wednesday and Thursday, Oct. 5-6, at 8.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Alexander Calder (1898-1976)—Drawings, stabiles, and mobiles. Through Oct. 22. (Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.) . . . ¶ Gouaches. Through Oct. 15. (Haime, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Joel Fisher / Marianne Eigenheer—Sculptures. / Drawings. Through Oct. 30. (Swiss Institute, 35 W. 67th St. Mondays through Fridays, 2 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 2 to 6.)

Stuart Frost—Pen-and-ink drawings of fantasy architecture, heavily embroidered with, say, figures or plants. Through Oct. 12. (Babcock, 20 E. 67th St. Closes at 4 on Saturdays.)

Anna and Wolfgang Kubach-Wilmsen—Stone sculptures representing books, letters, and newspapers. Through Oct. 22. (Staempfli, 47 E. 77th St.)

Rona Pondick—An installation of beds constructed with satin, wood, lead, and bronze. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Will Barnet—A dozen abstract paintings spanning the years 1940 to 1960. Through Oct. 15. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

Rudolf Bauer (1889-1953)—Geometric paintings and works on paper from the twenties and thirties. Through Oct. 7. (Kerr, 37 W. 57th St.)

William Beckman—Two double portraits of the artist and his wife, and the studies for them. Through Oct. 19. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Steven Campbell—Recent paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Chuck Close—Three exhibits. New portrait paintings (of Cindy Sherman, Alex Katz, and others) at Pace, 32 E. 57th St., second floor; on the third floor, recent prints and photographs, including flower subjects. . . . ¶ Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St., has photographs from the past twenty years. All through Oct. 22.

Antonio Frasconi—A new series of works inspired by the *desparecidos* of Uruguay. Through Tuesday, Oct. 4. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Robert Goodnough and David Hare—Abstract paintings and sculptures by each artist. Through Oct. 8. (Shippee, 41 E. 57th St.)

Jan Groover / Lee Krasner (1908-84)—Photographs. / Abstract impastoed paintings from the late thirties and early forties. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Tsugio Hattori—Abstract paintings. Through Oct. 29. (Reece, 24 W. 57th St.)

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Rebecca Horn—Kinetic sculptures powered by small motors which describe arcs, flap back and forth, and splatter paint around, all in a coldly humorous manner. Through Oct. 15. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Alan Johnston—Stylized gesso-and-charcoal paintings and bronze sculptures. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

Benjamin Lira—Emblematic figures recur in three recent paintings, some of which have sand or marble dust mixed in the medium. Through Wednesday, Oct. 5. (Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Elsie Manville—Still-lifes. Through Oct. 19. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

George Nick—Plein-air paintings of Boston and its environs. Through Wednesday, Oct. 5. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

Rodney Ripps—Drab stripe paintings with three-dimensional wood protrusions. Through Oct. 8. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Thomas Lanigan Schmidt—Adolescent rites of passage are the themes of new three-dimensional works by an artist who continues to mine the fields of tinfoil. Through Oct. 8. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Burt Silverman—Portrait drawings that have appeared in these pages accompanying Profiles. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Grand Central Art Galleries, 24 W. 57th St. (Open Mondays.)

James Wolfe / Lawrence Poons—New abstract sculptures constructed with ribbons of twisted steel. Through Oct. 8. / New paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

GALLERIES—SoHo

Dotty Attie—A draftsman noted for her illustrated stories is showing a group of paintings based on details from works by Caravaggio, Ingres, Eakins, and others. Through Oct. 15. (P.P.O.W, now located at 532 Broadway.)

Joseph Beuys (1921-86)—An installation entitled "Half Time," documenting the artist's 1982 planting of seven thousand oak trees in West Germany. Through Oct. 15. (Gallery Moos, 133 Greene St.)

Frederick Childs—Paintings. Through Oct. 8. (Brown, 560 Broadway.)

Y. J. Cho / Masao Gozu—Photo-Realist paintings of city corners and alleyways. / Photographs. Through Oct. 8. (O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway.)

Garth Evans—Recent abstract sculptures. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Douglas Florian—Large-scale paintings. Through Oct. 8. (Condeso-Lawler, 76 Greene St.)

Anne Burgess

Edgar Franceschi—Paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Allen, 560 Broadway.)

Vincent Gallo—Drawings. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Sidney Geist / Elliott Barowitz—Sculptures. / Paintings of airplanes and war machines. Through Oct. 8. (Ingber, 415 West Broadway.)

Jack Goldstein / Susan Leopold—Paintings done with phosphorescent paint. / Miniature cityscapes, street corners, and interiors set in boxes, each of which is viewed through a wide-angle lens. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

David Hacker—New sculptures and drawings. Through Oct. 8. (Plumb, 81 Greene St.)

Jan Håfström—Constructions incorporating wood, found objects, fabric, and paint. Through Wednesday, Oct. 5. (Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway.)

Budd Hopkins / Ellen Weiner—Paintings and large-scale wood sculptures. / Abstract works on paper. Through Oct. 13. (Pearl, 420 West Broadway.)

Mike Kelley—Drawings, banners, and objects, many of which display a scatological sense of humor. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Joseph Kosuth—Freud writ large again. Through Oct. 15. (Castelli, 578 Broadway, a new venue for the peripatetic dealer.)

Jannis Kounellis—An installation incorporating soil, rocks, burlap, and steel. Through Oct. 15. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Allan McCollum—The Alexander Gallery has been commandeered by a population of six-and-a-half-foot salt-shaker-like concrete sculptures, identical except for their coats of paint. Perhaps because they combine the characteristics of mass production and one-of-a-kind art, the artist calls them his "perfect vehicles." Through Tuesday, Oct. 4. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Mark Mennin—Sculptures. For instance, a primitive-looking stone-and-wood table supporting ancient-looking objects. Through Wednesday, Oct. 5. (Munroe, 415 West Broadway.)

Jim Nutt—Portraits of imaginary subjects with cockeyed features. Through Oct. 18. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Ludwig Sander (1906-75)—A retrospective of geometric color-field paintings. Through Oct. 15. (Esman, 70 Greene St.)

Kenny Scharf—New paintings with titles such as "Obglob" and "Ing," many of which seem to pulsate with forms resembling amoebas or arteries. Through Oct. 22. (Shafrazi, 163 Mercer St.)

Sandy Skoglund—An installation in which "A Breeze at Work" is illustrated by a generic office filled with falling leaves made of patinated bronze. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Brandt, 568 Broadway. . . . ¶ Lorence-Monk, at the same address, also has a show by the artist.)

Arlene Slavin—Three-dimensional jungle scenes constructed in the fashion of traditional and not so traditional screens. Through Oct. 8. (Perlow, 560 Broadway.)

Mike and Doug Starn—The Starn twins showing new photographic collages. Through Oct. 15. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Alan Turner—Paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

Anton van Dalen—A retrospective of paintings, sculptures, drawings, and objects such as wooden toys and dioramas. Through Oct. 29. (Exit Art, 578 Broadway.)

Clemens Weiss—An installation of transparent boxes that hold drawings, paintings, writings, and objects. Through Oct. 8. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Group Material—This collaborative has installed a classroom, the walls of which are hung with authentic student art and art by professionals. Jenny Holzer has an electronic sign that flashes messages like "If you had behaved nicely the Communists wouldn't exist." Through Oct. 8. (Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster St. Opens at noon.)

Group Shows—At the **Audiello**, 142 Greene St.: Sculptures by Saint Clair Cemin, Joel Fisher, Jon Kessler, and Joel Otterson. Through Oct.

ART—Cont'd

8. . . . **CASTELLI,** 142 Greene St.: Works by Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Richard Serra, and Frank Stella in the last show at this location. Through Oct. 22. . . . **THE DRAWING CENTER,** 35 Wooster St.: Drawings by sixteen artists. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Open Wednesday evenings until 8.) . . . **GLADSTONE,** 99 Greene St.: Sculptures by Carl Andre, Jannis Kounellis, and Bruce Nauman. Through Oct. 8. . . . **PHOENIX,** 568 Broadway: A show of works in various mediums by fifty-nine members of the Women in the Arts Foundation. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. . . . **SCHREIBER-CUTLER,** 171 Spring St.: Paintings by Cornelia Foss, Milton Resnick, Elaine de Kooning, and others. Through Oct. 8. . . . **SHAINMAN,** 560 Broadway: A sculpture each by Alice Aycock, Magdalena Jetelová, and Susana Solano in what the gallery calls a "Dialogue with Space." Through Oct. 15. . . . **SOHO 20,** 469 Broome St.: Paintings and sculptures by Penny Kaplan, Lucy Sallick, Shirley Gorelick, and others. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Opens at noon.)

OTHER GALLERIES

ALAN CHARLTON—New paintings. Through Oct. 8. (Klein, 611 Broadway.)

PERRY HOBERMAN—Wall sculptures. Through Oct. 9. (Postmasters, 66 Avenue A, near 4th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

RAMM-ELL-ZEE—Ephemera such as computer printouts and pages from telephone books are frozen in a resin gel along with objects like billiard balls and a tiny violin. The whole assemblage is painted in Day-Glo colors. Through Oct. 29. (Braathen, 33 Bleecker St., at Lafayette St.)

CY TWOMBLY—Works on paper from 1969 to 1985. Through Oct. 22. (Baghoomian, 611 Broadway.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

GÜNTHER FÖRG—Large-scale photographs of European architecture, plus watercolors. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Luhring Augustine & Hodes, 41 E. 57th St.)

KEN HEYMAN—Pictures of city life by a photographer who shoots from the hip. Through Oct. 8. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Opens at noon.)

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE—The Whitney Museum has mounted a show of his photographs. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

GEANNA MEROLA—Painted photographs. Through Saturday, Oct. 1. (Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

ARNOLD NEWMAN—A retrospective. Through Oct. 29. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.) . . . ¶ Portraits of Pollock, Warhol, and Mondrian, among other works. Through Oct. 8. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

NICHOLAS NIXON—Portraits of people with AIDS. Through Oct. 22. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays. A complementary show is at the Museum of Modern Art.)

LOUIS STETTNER—Photographs of street scenes in the United States, Mexico, and Europe, taken between 1947 and 1972. Through Oct. 22. (Photofind, 138 Spring St.)

JAMES WELLING—Photographs of draperies and diaries and of buildings designed by H. H. Richardson. Through Oct. 15. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

DON WORTH—A retrospective of prints by an artist who takes closeups of cacti and tropical flowers. Through Oct. 15. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY PHOTOGRAPHS—In celebration of its centennial, the Society has mined its archives for these two hundred and sixty-five photographs of panoramic landscapes, outer-space and underwater scenes, and people who leave home without the American Express card. Fewer than half of the works have appeared in *The National Geographic*. Through Oct. 30. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

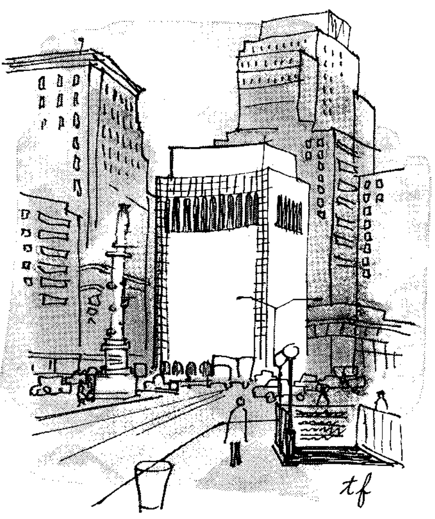
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A retrospective of works by Umberto Boccioni, an Italian Futurist painter and the only sculptor in that movement. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ A selection of watercolors and drawings by Paul Cézanne from the last thirty years of his life. Through Nov. 6. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—A comprehensive show of the drawings of Philip Guston. Through Nov. 1. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** About a hundred prints by Nicholas Nixon. Through Nov. 13. The artist also has an exhibit at the Zabriskie Gallery, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Silk screens and drawings from Andy Warhol's Mercedes-Benz series, a project he was working on at the time of his death. Starts Friday, Sept. 30. . . . ¶ A show of works from the fifties and sixties by Americans and Europeans—Beuys, Cornell, Hesse, Oldenburg, Nevelson, and others—who went against the tide of Abstract Expressionism by using images from pop culture and unconventional materials. Through Nov. 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Frank Gehry's architecture is surveyed in more than two hundred and fifty drawings, photographs, and models. The projects represented include the Fishdance Restaurant in Kobe, Japan, and the Laser Laboratory Building at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Also on display are several walk-through constructions. Through Sunday, Oct. 2. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Fifteen years' worth of Robert Mapplethorpe's prints are assembled in a show of nudes, portraits, and still-lifes. Through Oct. 23. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Lithographs, etchings, and woodcuts by early-twentieth-century German Expressionists—Beckmann, Schiele, Nolde, and Kirchner among them. Through Nov. 28. . . . ¶ "The Uses of Photography in Contemporary Art," a small exhibit from the permanent collection, with works by Julie Wachtel, Ellen Carey, and David Hockney. Through Oct. 10. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)



AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—An exhibition re-creating the events of a four-year (1838-42) American naval expedition to the South Seas and Antarctica and displaying a wealth of materials brought back from that voyage, including charts and maps and flora and fauna. Starts Friday, Sept. 30. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—In the seventeenth century, the cupboards and drawers of Burghley House, in Devonshire, were filled with Renaissance jewelry, pitchers with diamonds and rubies embedded in them, and gold and silver tableware. Sixty of these objets de vertu, preserved as heirlooms, have been brought here for display. Through Nov. 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—An exhibit of roughly a hundred music scores by, among others, Bach, Mahler, Arthur Sullivan, and Mozart (several by the last; the work on view that he composed at age five is in his father's hand). Through Nov. 6. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Geoffrey Beene, in the business now for twenty-five years, is being treated to a retrospective that includes not only clothes with his label but accessories, videos of fashion shows, and photographs by Horst, Richard Avedon, and others. Through Oct. 23. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

THE NEW MUSEUM, 583 Broadway—Malcolm McLaren, the subject of what the museum describes as "an unconventional art exhibition," has been called many things—most generously, rock producer, fashion designer, and cultural theorist. This collection of clothes, posters, album covers, cassettes, and videotapes follows McLaren's career as it bounced from the Sex Pistols to Adam and the Ants to a British fashion/bondage shop called Let It Rock. Through Nov. 20. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY AT LINCOLN CENTER—A fortieth-anniversary salute to the New York City Ballet in which the works of set and costume designers get all the applause. On exhibit, for instance, are sets and costumes by Isamu Noguchi for Balanchine's "Orpheus" (1947) and, from the 1964 "Nutcracker," a model by Rouben Ter-Arutunian and a drawing by Karinska incorporating swatched fabric. Through Jan. 6. (Open daily except Sundays. Hours: Mondays and Thursdays, 10 to 8; Tuesdays, 10 to 7; Wednesdays and Fridays, noon to 6; and Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—Opening performances of the season, which will run through May 6—Monday, Sept. 26, at 7: "Il Trovatore," with Eva Marton, Fiorenza Cossotto, Luciano Pavarotti, and Sherrill Milnes; conducted by James Levine. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 7:30: The Metropolitan's première of Handel's "Giulio Cesare," with Kathleen Battle, Tatiana Troyanos, Martine Dupuy, Sarah Walker, and Jeffrey Gall; Trevor Pinnock will conduct a chamber orchestra. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Sept. 28, at 8: "Das Rheingold," with Ellen Shade, Hanna Schwarz, Siegfried Jerusalem, and Horst Hiestermann; James Levine. . . . ¶ Thursday, Sept. 29, at 8: "Il Trovatore," with Eva Marton, Fiorenza Cossotto, Luciano Pavarotti, and Sherrill Milnes; James Levine. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 30, at 8:

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

MUSIC—Cont'd

"Lucia di Lammermoor," with Edita Gruberova, Francisco Araiza, and Brian Schexnayder; Edoardo Müller. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 1, at 1:30: "Das Rheingold," with Ellen Shade, Hanna Schwarz, Siegfried Jerusalem, and Horst Hiestermann; James Levine. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 1, at 8: "Giulio Cesare," with Kathleen Battle, Tatiana Troyanos, Martine Dupuy, Sarah Walker, and Jeffrey Gall; Trevor Pinnock. . . . ¶ Monday, Oct. 3, at 8: "Il Trovatore," with Eva Marton, Fiorenza Cossotto, Luciano Pavarotti, and Sherrill Milnes; James Levine. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 7:30: "Giulio Cesare," with Kathleen Battle, Tatiana Troyanos, Martine Dupuy, Sarah Walker, and Jeffrey Gall; Trevor Pinnock will conduct a chamber orchestra. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 8: "Lucia di Lammermoor," with Edita Gruberova, Francisco Araiza, and Brian Schexnayder; Edoardo Müller. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

New York City Opera—Tuesday evening, Sept. 27: "The Merry Widow," with Leigh Munro, Susanne Marsee, Richard White, and Michael Cousins; conducted by Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Thursday evening, Sept. 29: "Rasputin," with Margaret Cusack, John Cheek, Jon Garrison, and Henry Price; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Friday evening, Sept. 30: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Sheryl Woods, Rebecca Russell, Robert Orth, and Paul Austin Kelly; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, Oct. 1: "Rigoletto," with Christine Donahue, Janis Eckhart, Rodger Hugh Wangerin, and Paul Hartfield; Elio Boncompagni. . . . ¶ Saturday evening, Oct. 1: "Die Zauberflöte," with Sandra Moon, Virginia Sublett, Gran Wilson, and Jan Opalach; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Sunday matinée, Oct. 2: "Tosca," with Linda Roark-Strummer, Robert Grayson, and Julian Patrick; Elio Boncompagni. . . . ¶ Sunday evening, Oct. 2: "The Ballad of Baby Doe," with Faith Esham, Joyce Castle, and William Parcher; Hal France. . . . ¶ Tuesday evening, Oct. 4: "Die Zauberflöte," with Sandra Moon, Virginia Sublett, Gran Wilson, and Joseph McKee; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, Oct. 5: "Rasputin," with Margaret Cusack, John Cheek, Jon Garrison, and Henry Price; Christopher Keene. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 1. Through Sunday, Nov. 20.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "The Magic Flute." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Saturday, Oct. 1, at 7:30, and Sunday, Oct. 2, at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS

New York Philharmonic—Zubin Mehta conducting. Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 8: Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms" and his Third Symphony. With Wendy White, soprano; Sam Waterston, narrator; the New York Choral Artists; and the American Boychoir. . . . ¶ Thursday *through* Saturday, Sept. 29-Oct. 1, and Wednesday, Oct. 5, all at 8: A Dvořák-Mahler program, with Yo-Yo Ma, cello. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Riccardo Muti conducting a benefit program of music by Shostakovich and Prokofiev, with Viktoria Mullova, violin; Alexandrina Milcheva, mezzo-soprano; and the Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia, Seán Deibler directing. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 7:30.)

Buffalo Philharmonic—Semyon Bychkov conducting, with Katia and Marielle Labèque, duo piano. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sunday, Oct. 2, at 8.)

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra—Jesús López-Cobos conducting, with Bella Davidovich, piano. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Tuesday, Oct. 4, at 8.)

Dallas Symphony Orchestra—Eduardo Mata conducting works by Rachmaninoff and Stravinsky, with Vladimir Viardo, piano. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 8.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp conducting, with Stephanie Brown, piano. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 8.)

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RECITALS

Chelsea Chamber Ensemble—Playing new works by Samuel Zyman. With assisting artists. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Thursday, Sept. 29, at 8.)

Mannes Trio—Chamber music. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Thursday, Sept. 29, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

William Blaine—Piano. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Friday, Sept. 30, at 8.)

Malcolm Bilson—Fortepiano, in an all-Mozart benefit concert. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Saturday, Oct. 1, at 8. For information about tickets, call 280-2875.)

American String Quartet—Chamber music. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Saturday, Oct. 1, at 8. For information about tickets, call 749-2802.)

Valerie Coates—Mezzo-soprano. (Donnell Library, 20 W. 53rd St. Sunday, Oct. 2, at 2:30. No tickets necessary.)

Si-Yo Music Society—Chamber music. (Schimmel Center for the Arts, Pace University, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 488-1715. Sunday, Oct. 2, at 3.)

Viktor Tretyakov—Violin. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sunday, Oct. 2, at 3.)

Music Before 1800—Presenting Judith Malafronte, mezzo-soprano, and the Boston Museum Trio. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. Sunday, Oct. 2, at 4. For information about tickets, call 666-0675.)

Gageego—Playing eighteen solos for snare drum by, among others, Milton Babbitt, John Cage, and Benjamin Johnston. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. 517-0475. Monday, Oct. 3, at 8.)

Andrew Rangell—Piano, in the first of a seven-concert series of all thirty-two Beethoven sonatas. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Wednesday, Oct. 5, at 8.)

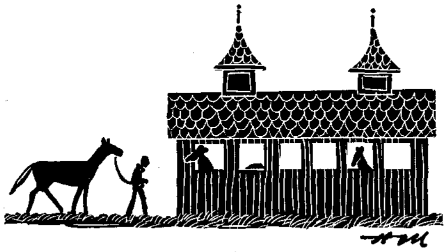
SPORTS

(The ticket-information number for Madison Square Garden is 563-8300, for the Meadowlands 1-201 935-3900, for Nassau Coliseum 1-516 587-9222, and for Shea Stadium 1-718 507-8499.)

Baseball—**mets** at Shea Stadium: Vs. St. Louis, Friday, Sept. 30, at 7:35; Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 1-2, at 1:35. . . . **national league championship series:** Starts Tuesday, Oct. 4. . . . **american league championship series:** Starts Wednesday, Oct. 5.

Football—Jets vs. Kansas City Chiefs. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. Sunday, Oct. 2, at 4.)

Hockey—Exhibition games—At **byrne meadowlands arena:** Devils vs. Hartford Whalers, Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 7:45. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Buffalo Sabres, Thursday, Sept. 29, at 7:45. . . . **nassau coliseum:** Islanders vs. Rangers, Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 8:05. . . . **madison square garden:** Rangers vs. Islanders, Wednesday, Sept. 28, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Hartford Whalers, Friday, Sept. 30, at 7:30.



Racing—At **belmont:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1; through Monday, Oct. 17. The Cowdin, Saturday, Oct. 1, and the Matron, Sunday, Oct. 2. . . . **meadowlands:** Weeknights at 7:30.

ET ALIA

Poetry Readings—Zbigniew Herbert reading from his own works, in Polish, with English translations read by Susan Sontag. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

New York Armory Antiques Show—Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century furniture and decorative accessories brought by a hundred and ten dealers from the United States, Europe, and Canada. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Wednesday, Oct. 5, from 4 to 9; Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 6-8, from noon to 9; and Sunday, Oct. 9, from noon to 6.)

COMING EVENTS

(A calendar for readers who plan a month or so ahead.)

Baseball—The World Series starts Oct. 15 in the home park of the National League Champion.

Basketball—Season openers—**nets** at Byrne Meadowlands Arena: Vs. Atlanta Hawks, Nov. 4. . . . **knicks** at Madison Square Garden: Vs. Chicago Bulls, Nov. 8.

Horse Show—National Horse Show, Madison Square Garden, Nov. 1-6.

Racing—Aqueduct opens Oct. 19.

Running—The New York City Marathon, Nov. 6.

Music—**metropolitan opera** (362-6000): The season continues through May 6. . . . **avery fisher hall** (874-2424): The New York Philharmonic season continues through May 27. . . . ¶ Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Oct. 16. . . . ¶ Stuttgart Radio Orchestra, Oct. 19. . . . ¶ Brandenburg Ensemble, Oct. 21. . . . ¶ Berlin Symphony, Oct. 23. . . . ¶ James Galway, Oct. 23. . . . ¶ Musica Sacra, Oct. 28. . . . ¶ "Nixon in China," Oct. 29. . . . ¶ Vladimir Spivakov, Oct. 30. . . . ¶ Philadelphia Orchestra, Nov. 2. . . . ¶ Gidon Kremer, Nov. 6. . . . **carnegie hall** (247-7800): Itzhak Perlman and Samuel Sanders, Oct. 6. . . . ¶ Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Oct. 8. . . . ¶ American Composers Orchestra, Oct. 9 and Nov. 6. . . . ¶ Boston Symphony, Oct. 11-13. . . . ¶ Emerson String Quartet, Oct. 15. . . . ¶ Philadelphia Orchestra, Oct. 18. . . . ¶ Prague Symphony, Oct. 19. . . . ¶ Stuttgart Radio Orchestra, Oct. 20. . . . ¶ Pinchas Zukerman and Marc Neikrug, Oct. 25. . . . ¶ Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Oct. 30. . . . ¶ Vienna Philharmonic, Nov. 1 and 4-6. . . . ¶ Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Nov. 9. . . . **alice tully hall** (362-1911): Julian Bream, Oct. 9. . . . ¶ Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Oct. 12, 16, 18, and 28-30. . . . ¶ Musica Antiqua Köln, Oct. 16. . . . ¶ Elmar Oliveira, Oct. 17. . . . **92nd street y** (427-4410): New York Chamber Symphony, Oct. 8-9 and Nov. 5-6. . . . ¶ Tokyo String Quartet, Oct. 15. . . . ¶ Chamber Music at the Y, Oct. 18-19. . . . ¶ Andrew Rangell, Nov. 2. . . . **grace rainey rogers auditorium,** Metropolitan Museum (570-3949): Beaux Arts Trio, Oct. 21-22. . . . ¶ Orchestra of St. Luke's, Oct. 28. . . . ¶ Kalichstein-Laredo-Robison Trio, Oct. 29. . . . ¶ Ruth Laredo, Oct. 31. . . . ¶ Paula Robison, Nov. 5. . . . **town hall** (840-2824): American String Quartet, Oct. 11. . . . ¶ Bethany Beardslee, Oct. 12. . . . ¶ Sharon Isbin, Nov. 9.

Other Dates—Columbus Day will be observed on Monday, Oct. 10. . . . ¶ Registration days for the Nov. 8 elections, Oct. 13 and 15. . . . ¶ Daylight-saving time ends Sunday, Oct. 30. . . . ¶ The Next Wave Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Oct. 19-Dec. 18. . . . ¶ Fall Antiques Show, Passenger Pier 92, Oct. 20-23. . . . ¶ National Postage Stamp Show, Madison Square Garden, Oct. 20-23.

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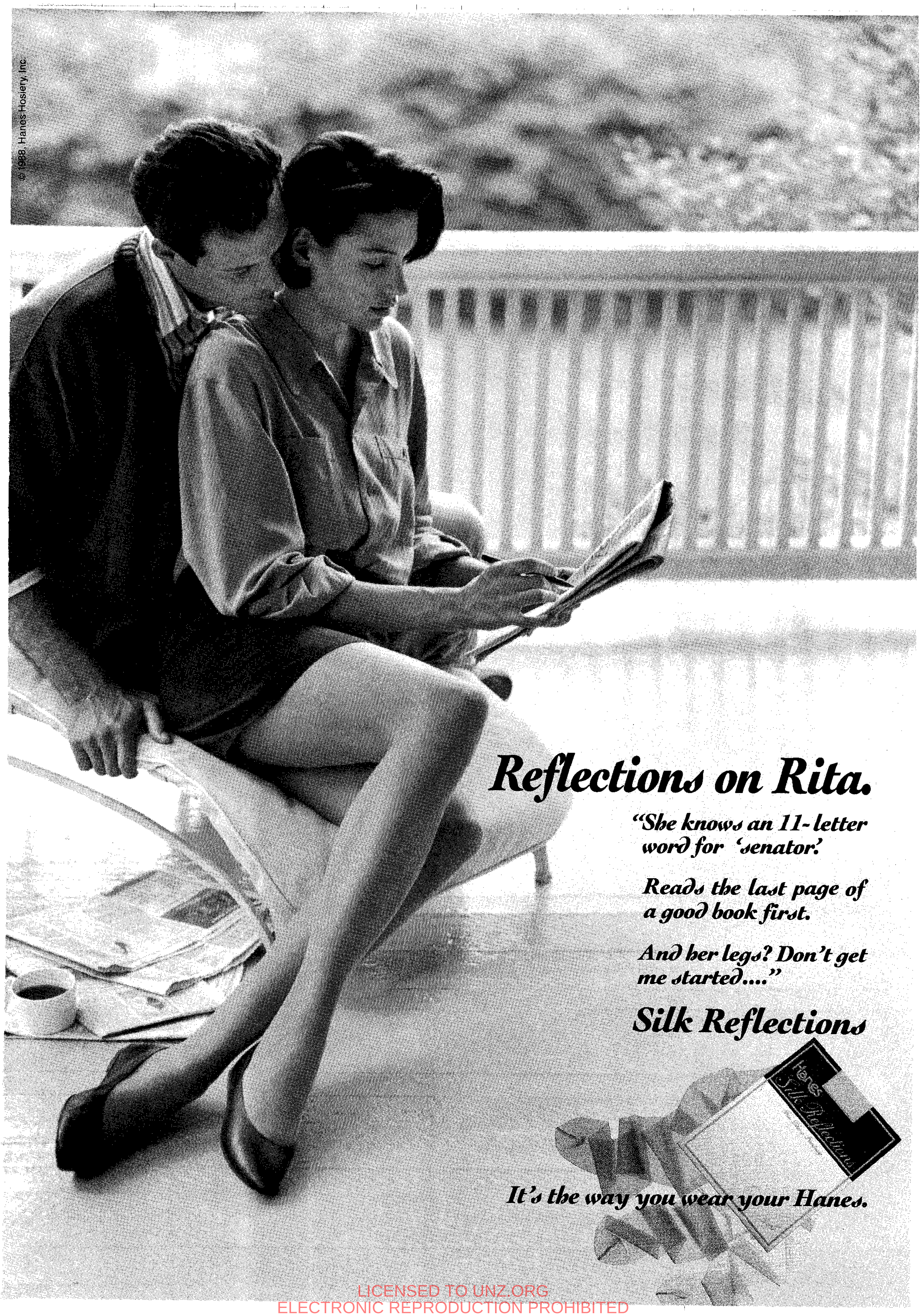

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
(Separate admissions) "Doc's Kingdom" (1987; directed by Robert Kramer), with Paul McIsaac and Vincent Gallo; and "Commissar" (1967; Alexander Askoldov; in Russian).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Sweet Hearts Dance" (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins.
Theatre 2: "Die Hard" (†).
Theatre 3: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Dead Ringers" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through Sept. 29: "Moon Over Parador" (†). From Sept. 30: "Gorillas in the Mist" (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Married to the Mob" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 27: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†). From Sept. 28: "Memories of Me" (Henry Winkler), with Billy Crystal, Alan King, and JoBeth Williams.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Sept. 29: "Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam" (Bill Couturie), a documentary.
From Sept. 30 (tentative): "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Ground Zero" (Michael Pattinson and Bruce Myles), with Colin Friels, Jack Thompson, and Donald Pleasence.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Dead Ringers" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through Sept. 28: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
Sept. 29: Theatre closed.
From Sept. 30: "Bird" (Clint Eastwood), with Forest Whitaker.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 29: "Moon Over Parador" (†). From Sept. 30: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 29: "Midnight Run" (†). From Sept. 30: To be announced.

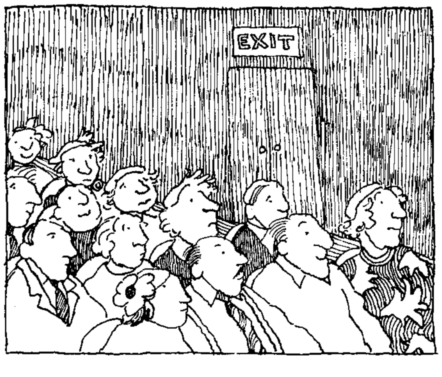
D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Sept. 29: "Kansas" (David Stevens), with Matt Dillon and Andrew McCarthy.
From Sept. 30: "Heartbreak Hotel" (Chris Columbus), with David Keith, Tuesday Weld, and Charlie Schlatter.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 29: "Die Hard" (†). From Sept. 30: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 29: "Running on Empty" (†). From Sept. 30: "Punchline" (David Seltzer), with Sally Field and Tom Hanks.

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: Theatre closed.
Theatre 2: "Tiger Warsaw" (Amin Q. Chaudhri), with Patrick Swayze.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Patty Hearst" (Paul Schrader), with Natasha Richardson.
Theatre 2: "Sweet Hearts Dance" (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Gorillas in the Mist" (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.



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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 22.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 27: "Married to the Mob" (†). From Sept. 28: "Memories of Me" (Henry Winkler), with Billy Crystal, Alan King, and JoBeth Williams.
Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Eight Men Out" (John Sayles).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Sweet Hearts Dance" (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 29: "Tougher Than Leather" (Rick Rubin), with Run-D.M.C. From Sept. 30: "Elvira: Mistress of the Dark" (James Signorelli), with Elvira.
Theatre 2: "Patty Hearst" (Paul Schrader), with Natasha Richardson.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 29: "Kansas" (David Stevens), with Matt Dillon and Andrew McCarthy. From Sept. 30 (tentative): "Heartbreak Hotel" (Chris Columbus), with David Keith, Tuesday Weld, and Charlie Schlatter.
Theatre 2: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatres open in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 27: "The Love Child" (1987; directed by Robert Smith). From Sept. 28: "Nanou" (1987; Conny Templeman), with Imogen Stubbs, Jean-Philippe Ecoffey, and Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 2: See listings under "Revival Houses."

Bleecker St. Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 29: "Murder One" (Graeme Campbell), with Henry Thomas and James Wilder. From Sept. 30: "Big Time" (Chris Blum), with Tom Waits.
Theatre 2: "Mama Turns 100" (Carlos Saura; in Spanish), with Geraldine Chaplin.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 29: "Big" (†). From Sept. 30: To be announced.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
"Running on Empty" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Moon Over Parador" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 29: "Midnight Run" (†). From Sept. 30: "Gorillas in the Mist" (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Babette's Feast" (†).
Theatre 2: "Track 29" (Nicolas Roeg), with Theresa Russell and Gary Oldman.
Theatre 3: "Patty Hearst" (Paul Schrader), with Natasha Richardson.
Theatre 4: "Patty Hearst."

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 29: "Kansas" (David Stevens), with Matt Dillon and Andrew McCarthy. From Sept. 30: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 29: "Tiger Warsaw" (Amin Q. Chaudhri), with Patrick Swayze. From Sept. 30: "Elvira: Mistress of the Dark" (James Signorelli), with Elvira.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 29: "Eight Men Out" (John Sayles). From Sept. 30: "Heartbreak Hotel" (Chris Columbus), with David Keith, Tuesday Weld, and Charlie Schlatter.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Oct. 4: "Eight Men Out" (John Sayles).
From Oct. 5: "Under the World."

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Last Temptation of Christ" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Big" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Kansas" (David Stevens), with Matt Dillon and Andrew McCarthy.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Moon Over Parador" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Babette's Feast" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Miles from Home" (Gary Sinise), with Richard Gere and Kevin Anderson.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
Through Sept. 28: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).
From Sept. 29: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Eight Men Out" (John Sayles).

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Thin Blue Line" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bagdad Café" (†).
Theatre 3: "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" ("L'Ami de Mon Amie") (†).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Matador" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wings of Desire" ("Der Himmel über Berlin") (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through Sept. 29: "Tiger Warsaw" (Amin Q. Chaudhri), with Patrick Swayze.
From Sept. 30: "Gorillas in the Mist" (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Kansas" (David Stevens), with Matt Dillon and Andrew McCarthy.
Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).
Theatre 3: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
Theatre 4: "Patty Hearst" (Paul Schrader), with Natasha Richardson.
Theatre 5: "Sweet Hearts Dance" (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins.
Theatre 6: Through Sept. 27: "Married to the

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Mob" (†). From Sept. 28: "Memories of Me" (Henry Winkler), with Billy Crystal, Alan King, and JoBeth Williams.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Dead Ringers" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 29: "Moon Over Parador" (†). From Sept. 30: To be announced.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 29: "Midnight Run" (†). From Sept. 30: To be announced.
Theatre 2: "Running on Empty" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Coming to America" (directed by John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "Messenger of Death" (J. Lee Thompson), with Charles Bronson.
Theatre 3: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 29: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez. From Sept. 30: "Tougher Than Leather" (Rick Rubin), with Run-D.M.C.
Theatre 5: "Die Hard" (†).
Theatre 6: "Sweet Hearts Dance" (Robert Greenwald), with Don Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Jeff Daniels, and Elizabeth Perkins.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
Through Sept. 29: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.
From Sept. 30: "Heartbreak Hotel" (Chris Columbus), with David Keith, Tuesday Weld, and Charlie Schlatter.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "Patty Hearst" (Paul Schrader), with Natasha Richardson.
Theatre 3: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 29: "Married to the Mob" (†). From Sept. 30: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through Sept. 29: "Tougher Than Leather" (Rick Rubin), with Run-D.M.C.
From Sept. 30: "Elvira: Mistress of the Dark" (James Signorelli), with Elvira.

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
Through Sept. 29: "Seven Hours to Judgment" (Beau Bridges), with Bridges and Ron Leibman.
From Sept. 30: "Gorillas in the Mist" (Michael Apted), with Sigourney Weaver.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 29: "Running on Empty" (†). From Sept. 30: To be announced.
Theatre 2: "Dead Ringers" (†).

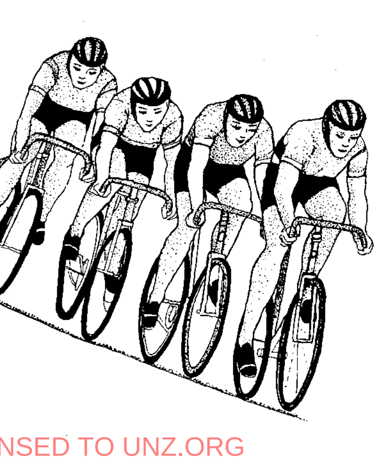
Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
Through Sept. 29: "Midnight Run" (†).
From Sept. 30: To be announced.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Sept. 26: "Twentieth Century" (1934; directed by Howard Hawks), with John Barrymore, Carole Lombard, and Ralph Forbes; and "She Married Her Boss" (1935; Gregory La Cava), with Claudette Colbert and Melvyn Douglas.
Sept. 27-28: "Café Metropole" (1937; Edward H. Griffith), with Tyrone Power, Loretta Young, Adolphe Menjou, and Helen Westley; and "Wife, Husband, and Friend" (1939; Gregory Ratoff), with Loretta Young, Warner Baxter, and Cesar Romero.
Sept. 29-Oct. 1: "Adam's Rib" (1949; George Cukor), with Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, and Judy Holliday; and "It Should Happen to You" (†).
Oct. 2-3: "Topper" (†) and "Tom, Dick, and Harry" (†).
Oct. 4-5: "The Ghost and Mrs. Muir" (1947; Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Gene Tierney and Rex Harrison; and "Heaven Can Wait" (1943 †).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Sept. 27: "Singin' in the Rain" (1952; Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen), with Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor, Jean Hagen, and Millard Mitchell; and "The Band Wagon" (1953; Vincente Minnelli), with Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse, and Nanette Fabray.
Sept. 28-29: "The Arabian Nights" (1973; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian); and "The Canterbury Tales" (1972; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Hugh Griffith, Alan Webb, and Jenny Runacre.
Sept. 30-Oct. 1: "School Daze" (1988; Spike Lee); and "She's Gotta Have It" (1986; Spike Lee), with Tracy Camila Johns, Tommy Redmond Hicks, John Canada Terrell, and Lee.
Oct. 2: "The Draughtsman's Contract" (1983; Peter Greenaway), with Anthony Higgins, Janet Suzman, and Anne Louise Lambert; and "Blow-Up" (1966; Michelangelo Antonioni), with Vanessa Redgrave and David Hemmings.
Oct. 3-4: "Tokyo Pop" (1988; Fran Rubel Kuzui), with Carrie Hamilton; and "Rock 'n' Roll High School" (1979), with the Ramones.
From Oct. 5: "Dead Cert" (1974; Tony Richardson); and "Coup de Torchon" (†).

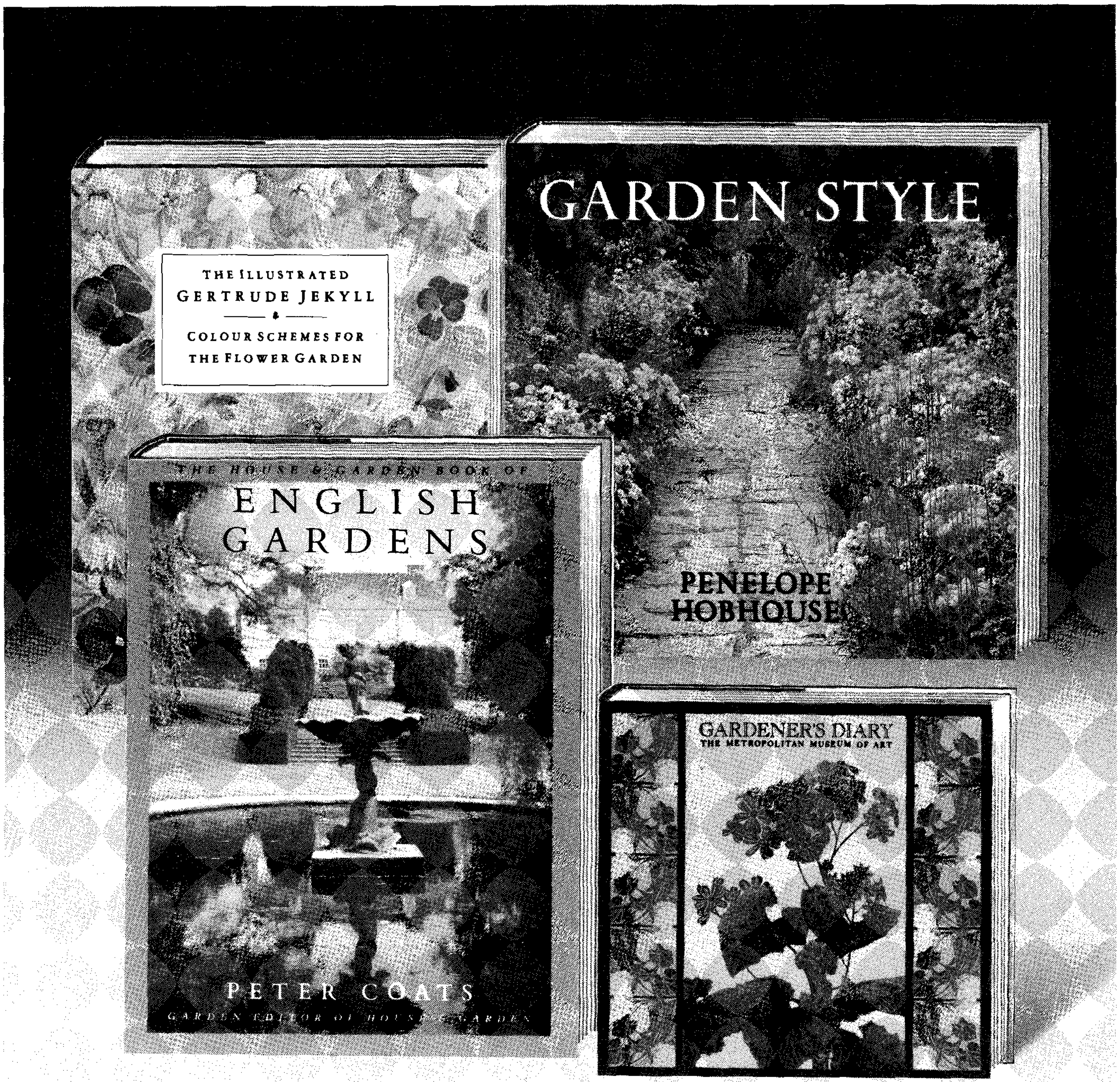
Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Sept. 26: "Whoopee" (1930; Thornton Freeland), with Eddie Cantor, Eleanor Hunt, Paul Gregory, and Jack Rutherford; "Kid Boots" (1926; Frank Tuttle; a silent film), with Eddie Cantor and Clara Bow; and "Ella Cinders" (1926; Alfred E. Greene; a silent film), with Colleen Moore and Lloyd Hughes.
Sept. 27: "A Girl in Every Port" (1928; Howard Hawks; a silent film), with Victor McLaglen, Robert Armstrong, and Louise Brooks; "Fazil" (*1928; Howard Hawks;* a silent film), with Greta Nissen and Charles Farrell; and "Down to the Sea in Ships" (1922; Elmer Clifton; a silent film), with Elizabeth Foley.
Sept. 28: "Virtue" (1932; Eddie Buzzell), with Carole Lombard and Pat O'Brien; and "Ladies of Leisure" (1930; Frank Capra), with Barbara Stanwyck, Ralph Graves, Marie Prevost, and Lowell Sherman.
Sept. 29: "The Hollywood Revue" (†); and "The Dancers" (1925; Emmett Flynn; a silent film), with Madge Bellamy and George O'Brien.
Sept. 30: "It" (1927; Clarence Bagder; a silent film), with Clara Bow and Antonio Moreno; and "The Younger Generation" (1929; Frank Capra), with Lina Basquette.
Oct. 1: "Bombshell" (1933; Victor Fleming), with Jean Harlow, Franchot Tone, Lee Tracy, and Frank Morgan; and "The Saturday Night Kid" (1929; Edward Sutherland), with Clara Bow and Jean Arthur.
Oct. 2: "Sadie Thompson" (1928; Raoul Walsh; a silent film), with Gloria Swanson, Walsh, Lionel Barrymore, and Blanche Frederici; "The Lucky Lady" (1926; Raoul Walsh; a silent film), with Lionel Barrymore and Greta Nissen; and "Fine Manners" (1926; Richard Rosson; a silent film), with Gloria Swanson.



Oct. 3: "That Certain Thing" (1928; Frank Capra; a silent film), with Ralph Graves; "So This Is Love" (1928; Frank Capra; a silent film), with Shirley Mason and William Collier, Jr.; and "Dancing Mothers" (1926; Herbert Brenon; a silent film), with Clara Bow, Alice Joyce, and Conway Tearle.
Oct. 4: "Call Her Savage" (1932; John Francis Dillon), with Clara Bow and Gilbert Roland; and "Ten Cents a Dance" (†).
Oct. 5: A compilation of musical numbers featuring female stars of the late twenties and early thirties.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Sept. 26: "Went the Day Well?" (1942; Alberto Cavalcanti), with Leslie Banks, Elizabeth Allen, Frank Lawton, and Basil Sydney; and "Millions Like Us" (1943; Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat), with Patricia Roc, Eric Portman, and Gordon Jackson.
Sept. 27: "Fail Safe" (1964; Sidney Lumet), with Henry Fonda, Dan O'Herlihy, Walter Matthau, and Frank Overton; and "Dr. Strangelove" (1964; Stanley Kubrick), with Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, and Sterling Hayden.
Sept. 28: "Elmer Gantry" (1960; Richard Brooks), with Burt Lancaster, Jean Simmons, Arthur Kennedy, and Dean Jagger; and "The Miracle" (1948; Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani and Federico Fellini.
Sept. 29: "The Libertine" (1969; Pasquale Festa-Campanile; in Italian), with Catherine Spaak and Jean-Louis Trintignant; and "Ecstasy" (†).
Sept. 30-Oct. 1: "My Beautiful Laundrette" (1986; Stephen Frears), with Roshan Seth, Saeed Jaffrey, Gordon Warnecke, and Daniel Day Lewis; and "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid" (1987; Stephen Frears), with Ayub Khan Din, Frances Barber, and Shashi Kapoor.
Oct. 2: "Children of Paradise" (1945; Marcel Carné; in French), with Jean-Louis Barrault, Arletty, Pierre Brasseur, and Marie Casarès.
Oct. 3: "The King of Comedy" (†) and "After Hours" (†).
Oct. 4: "Two Thousand Maniacs" (1964; Herschell Gordon Lewis), with Connie Mason; and "The Sadist" (1963; James Landis).
Oct. 5: "Baby Doll" (1956; Elia Kazan), with Karl Malden, Carroll Baker, Eli Wallach, and Mildred Dunnock; and "Pinky" (1949; Elia Kazan), with Jeanne Crain, William Lundigan, Ethel Barrymore, and Ethel Waters.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Sept. 26: "Ivan the Terrible, Parts I and II" (1944-46; Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian), with Nikolai Cherkassov.
Sept. 27: "Rio Rita" (1929; Luther Reed), with Bebe Daniels, John Boles, Bert Wheeler, and Robert Woolsey; and "Sunny" (1930; William A. Seiter), with Marilyn Miller.
Sept. 28: "Breaker Morant" (1980; Bruce Beresford), with Edward Woodward; and "Gallipoli" (1981; Peter Weir), with Mel Gibson, Mark Lee, and Bill Kerr.
Sept. 29: "Somewhere in the Night" (1946; Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with John Hodiak; and "House of Strangers" (1949; Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Edward G. Robinson and Susan Hayward.
Sept. 30-Oct. 1: "Wuthering Heights" (1939; William Wyler), with Merle Oberon, Laurence Olivier, Flora Robson, and David Niven; and "Jane Eyre" (1944; Robert Stevenson), with Joan Fontaine and Orson Welles.
Oct. 2: "The Innocents" (1961; Jack Clayton), with Deborah Kerr and Michael Redgrave; and "The Uninvited" (†).
Oct. 3: "Wild Strawberries" (1957; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Victor Sjöström, Ingrid Thulin, and Gunnar Björnstrand; and "Shame" (1968; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Liv Ulmann, Max von Sydow, and Gunnar Björnstrand.
Oct. 4: "The Criminal Code" (1931; Howard Hawks), with Walter Huston, Phillips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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Holmes, and Constance Cummings; and "Crime and Punishment" (1935 †).
Oct. 5: "Heaven Can Wait" (1943 †); and "Rings on Her Fingers" (1942; Rouben Mamoulian), with Gene Tierney, Henry Fonda, Laird Cregar, and Spring Byington.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, *Roy and Niuta Titus* Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

Theatre 1: Sept. 26 at 2:30: "The Brave Don't Cry" (1952; directed by Philip Leacock), with John Gregson and Meg Buchanan. . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 6: "Blue Scar" (1948; Jill Craigie), with Gwyneth Vaughan, Emrys Jones, and Rachel Thomas. . . . ¶ Sept. 27 at 2:30: "White Corridors" (1951; Pat Jackson), with Googie Withers, Petulia Clarke, and James Donald. . . . ¶ Sept. 27 at 6 and Sept. 29 at 2:30: "They Made Me a Fugitive" (1947; Alberto Cavalcanti), with Trevor Howard, Griffith Jones, and Sally Gray. . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 6: "White Corridors." . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 2:30: "Now Barabbas Was a Robber . . ." (1949; Gordon Parry), with Richard Greene, Cedric Hardwicke, and Richard Burton. . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 6: "Night and the City" (1950; Jules Dassin), with Richard Widmark, Gene Tierney, and Googie Withers. . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 2: "The Sacrifice" (1986; Andrei Tarkovsky; in Swedish, with English subtitles), with Erland Josephson and Susan Fleetwood. . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 5:30: "Cries and Whispers" (1973; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish, with English subtitles), with Harriet Andersson, Ingrid Thulin, and Liv Ullmann. . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 1: "The Wooden Horse" (1950; Jack Lee), with Leo Genn, David Tomlinson, and Anthony Steel. . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 3: "Woman in a Dressing Gown" (1957; J. Lee Thompson), with Yvonne Mitchell, Anthony Quayle, and Sylvia Syms. . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 5: "No Love for Johnnie" (1961; Ralph Thomas), with Peter Finch, Stanley Holloway, and Mervyn Johns. . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 2: "The Brave Don't Cry;" and "Above Us the Earth" (1977; Karl Francis), with Windsor Rees and Gwen Francis. . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 6: "The Wooden Horse." . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 2:30: "No Love for Johnnie." . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 6: "Woman in a Dressing Gown."

Theatre 2: Oct. 1 at 1: "The Brave Don't Cry" (1952; Philip Leacock), with John Gregson and Meg Buchanan. . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 3: "Above Us the Earth" (1977; Karl Francis), with Windsor Rees and Gwen Francis. . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 5: "Now Barabbas Was a Robber . . ." (1949; Gordon Parry), with Richard Greene, Cedric Hardwicke, and Richard Burton. . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 1: "Fanny and Alexander" (1983; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish, with English subtitles), with Eva Fröling, Erland Josephson, and Bertil Guve. . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 5: "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (1988; Philip Kaufman), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Juliette Binoche, and Lena Olin. . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 3: "Pretty Baby" (1978; Louis Malle), with Brooke Shields, Keith Carradine, and Susan Sarandon. . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 6: "The Sacrifice" (1986; Andrei Tarkovsky; in Swedish, with English subtitles), with Erland Josephson and Susan Fleetwood.

New York Film Festival—A seventeen-day series of international films at Alice Tully Hall—*Sept. 26 at 6:15:* "La Maschera" (Fiorella Infascelli; Italy). . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 9:15 and Sept. 27 at 6:15: "Bird" (Clint Eastwood; United States). . . . ¶ Sept. 27 at 9:30 and Sept. 28 at 6:15: "The Man with Three Coffins" (Lee Chang-Ho; South Korea). . . . ¶ Sept. 28 at 9:15: "The Last of England" (Derek Jarman; Great Britain). . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 6:15: "Distant Voices, Still Lives" (Terence Davies; Great Britain). . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 9:15: "Ashik Kerib" (Sergei Paradjanov; U.S.S.R.). . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 6:15: "Daughter of the Nile" (Hou Hsiao-hsien; Taiwan). . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 9:15: "Pelle the Conqueror" (Bille August; Denmark). . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at noon: "Ashik Kerib." . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 2:30: "Pelle the Conqueror." . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 6: Works by avant-garde filmmakers Stan Brakhage, Laurie Dunphy, Warren Sonbert, and Chick Strand. . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 9 and Oct. 2 at 1:30: "Opening Night" (1978; John Cassavetes; United States). . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 5: "Distant Voices, Still Lives." . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 7: "Daughter of the Nile." . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 9:30 and Oct. 3 at 6:15: "A Winter Tan" (Jackie Burroughs, Louise Clark, John Frizzell, John Walker, and Aerlyn Weissman; Canada). . . . ¶ Oct. 3 at 9:15 and Oct. 4 at 6:15: "Jacob" (Mircea Daneliuc; Rumania). . . . ¶ Oct. 4 at 9:15: "36 Fillette" (Catherine Breillat; France). . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 6:15: "Golub" (Jerry Blumenthal and Gordon Quinn; United States) and "Falkenau" (Emil Weiss; France). . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 9:15: "Hard Times" (*João Botelha; Portugal*). (*For tickets, call 362-1911.*)

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Through Oct. 6: "Woody Allen: The Television Work," featuring "The Kraft Music Hall: Woody Allen Looks at 1967" and a compilation of performances by and conversations with Allen from 1962 to 1977. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 12:05, 1:45, and 3:30.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—This new museum, devoted to the art, history, and technology of film, television, and video, has mounted a permanent exhibition called "Behind the Screen: Producing, Promoting, and Exhibiting Motion Pictures and Television," which includes "Tut's Fever," an installation by Red Grooms and Lysiane Luong. (Museum hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1 to 5; Fridays, 1 to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 8; and Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Riklis Theatre: Sept. 28 at 2:30: "Summertime" (1955; David Lean), with Katharine Hepburn and Rossano Brazzi. . . . ¶ Sept. 29 at 2:30: "Under Capricorn" (1949; Alfred Hitchcock), with Ingrid Bergman, *Joseph Cotten, and Michael Wilding.* . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 2:30: "The Band Wagon" (1953; Vincente Minnelli), with Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse, and Nanette Fabray. . . . ¶ Sept. 30 at 7:30: "El Dorado" (1967; Howard Hawks), with John Wayne, Robert Mitchum, and James Caan. . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 12:30: "Summertime." . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 3: "Under Capricorn." . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 7:30: "The Fall of the Roman Empire" (1964; Anthony Mann), with Sophia Loren and Stephen Boyd. . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 12:30: "Hans Christian Andersen" (1952; Charles Vidor), with Danny Kaye. . . . ¶ Oct. 2 at 3: "The Gang's All Here" (1943; Busby Berkeley), with Alice Faye, Carmen Miranda, Charlotte Greenwood, and James Ellison. . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 2:30: "Hans Christian Andersen."

Warner Communications Screening Room: Through Oct. 7: Continuous showing of forty-six videotapes on the subject of the media and the Vietnam War.

Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2111)—Through Sept. 29, showings at 7: Four different programs of avant-garde films. . . . ¶ Sept. 30-Oct. 1 at 6, 8, and 10, and Oct. 2-6 at 6 and 8: "Cane Toads: An Unnatural History" (1988; Mark Lewis) and three films by Jane Campion.

Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-2742)—A program of films from Hong Kong, in Cantonese, with English and Chinese subtitles. Sept. 30 at 3: "Peking Opera Blues" (1987; *Tsui Hark*). . . . ¶ *Sept. 30 at 7:* "Gangs" (1988; Lawrence Ah Mon). . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 3: "Health Warning" (1983; Kirk Wong). . . . ¶ Oct. 1 at 7: "Mr. Vampire" (1986; Lau Kun Wai).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Terrence Rafferty.)

After Hours (1985)—Martin Scorsese directed, and his work is lively and companionable. But this skittish paranoid fantasy is just a classroom exercise of a movie: elegant, crisp, and flashy, with perky zooms and cute little dissolves. Griffin Dunne plays a young word processor in midtown New York, who goes down to SoHo for a date and finds himself trapped in a nightmare world, where he has to contend with one flaky, threatening woman after another: Rosanna Arquette, Linda Fiorentino, Teri Garr, Catherine O'Hara, and Verna Bloom. The cast includes John Heard, Cheech and Chong, Dick Miller, and Bronson Pinchot. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 3.)

Babette's Feast—In a village on Denmark's gray, blustery Jutland peninsula, sometime in the eighteen-eighties, Babette (Stéphane Audran), the French servant of a pair of elderly unmarried sisters (Birgitte Federspiel and Bodil Kjer), prepares a special dinner for her employers and their guests—a lavish, one-time-only orgy of haute cuisine served to a group of devout Lutherans who are used to receiving the Lord's bounty in the form of grim little slabs of boiled fish. Adapting one of Isak Dinesen's "Anecdotes of Destiny," Gabriel Axel, the writer-director, tells this simple tale simply. He establishes a lulling, bedtime-story tone right from the start, perhaps too successfully: our eyelids begin to seem very heavy after twenty minutes or so. The whole thing turns out to be about the consolations of art, and the union of "righteousness and bliss." The film is more righteous than blissful: a more austere celebration of the pleasures of the senses would be difficult to imagine. In Danish and French. —T.R. (Quad Cinema, and Carnegie Screening Room.)

Bagdad Café—After an argument with her husband on a godforsaken stretch of highway at the edge of the Mojave Desert, a fat German tourist named Jasmin (Marianne Sägebrecht) checks into a crummy motel attached to the equally crummy Bagdad Café. This movie, the first in English by the German director Percy Adlon (whose 1985 "Sugarbaby" was also a vehicle for Sägebrecht), is filled with eccentrics who are apparently meant to be lovable. The rather precious conceit of the film is that Jasmin somehow brings the outcast characters together in a kind of extended family; by the end, the Bagdad Café has been transformed into a popular roadside cabaret, with everyone contributing a specialty (Jasmin does magic tricks). The American performers are trapped in a movie that treats them as merely exotic—waxwork grotesques waiting to be animated by a mysterious German touch. Eleonore Adlon and Christopher Doherty collaborated with the director on the screenplay.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Big—A formula fantasy film that has been directed very gently and tactfully by Penny Marshall; she sleepwalks you through the script (by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg) about a twelve-year-old boy who wishes he were big and is magically given the body of a man in his thirties—Tom Hanks. There are neat, flaky moments, but everything has a tepid inevitability, and even as you smile you may be groaning inwardly, because "Big" is dedicated to awakening the child in all of us. Of course, the Hanks character isn't ready to function as an adult; he wants to go back. The movie wants to go back, too. It's nostalgic for childhood, for suburbia, for innocent fun. (It isn't about kids wanting to be big; it's about grownups feeling little.) In its wholesome way, "Big" is selling the slick wonders of immaturity. With the slyly sexy Elizabeth Perkins, and good comic work by *Robert Loggia and Jared Rushton.* (Reviewed in our issue of 6/27/88.) (Festival. . . . ¶ Waverly; through Sept. 29.)

Boyfriends and Girlfriends ("L'Ami de Mon Amie")—The sixth, and last, in Eric Rohmer's series of "Comedies and Proverbs" is a light romantic comedy set in Cergy-Pontoise, an overdesigned and self-contained modern suburb of Paris. In this bourgeois Forest of Arden, four completely unremarkable young people—two women, two men—reshuffle their affections so that each winds up with the

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

IN BRIEF–Cont'd

"right" partner in the end. It's essentially the same leisurely comedy of self-knowledge that Rohmer has been making for nearly twenty years, but this time he treats his themes with a frivolous, casual air. He takes pleasure in the cleanness and brightness of this world, in the contented buzz of shoppers and office workers and Sunday picnickers, in the forthright way his characters pursue their comforts. "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" is fluff: it's artificial without being oppressive—a graceful, friendly abstraction. In French.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Coup de Torchon (1981; "Clean Slate")—Bertrand Tavernier's film is set in some sort of French colonial Dogpatch in Africa, in 1938, just before the start of the Second World War, and it stars Philippe Noiret as a cuckolded weakling who is jeered at by the pimps and the other brutal white men who exploit the natives. He is also the only officer of the law in the area, and he secretly kills off the exploiters, using his reputation for being cowardly and ineffectual as a cover. The movie is torpid even in the early sequences that aim at sly farce, and its thesis is that even such drastic and half-mad cleanup jobs are hopeless. Tavernier may think he's bringing out the rage behind despair, but all he brings out is his sense of futility. The script, by Jean Aurenche and Tavernier, is based on the American pulp novel "Pop. 1280," by Jim Thompson, which was set in the American South. In French. (Cinema Village; starting Oct. 5.)

Crime and Punishment (1935)—There's almost everything you can think of the matter with this Hollywood version, directed by Josef von Sternberg, but it has a great Raskolnikov: Peter Lorre. Stolid Edward Arnold is embarrassingly miscast as Inspector Porfiry. As the pawnbroker, Mrs. Patrick Campbell adds some distinction, but not much can be said for the Madonna lighting given to Marian Marsh's placid Sonya, or for the standard Hollywood performances of Elisabeth Risdon, Tala Birell, Gene Lockhart, Robert Allen, and Douglass Dumbrille. There's nothing Russian about them except the long-winded names by which they address each other. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 4.)

Dead Ringers—With Jeremy Irons and Geneviève Bujold, directed by David Cronenberg. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gramercy, Gotham Cinema, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Die Hard—A formula action picture, but with the extra-potency formula. It has the sweatiest hero, the most sinister bad guys (with the thickest foreign accents), the silliest plot twists, the loudest explosions, the most gratuitous bursts of machine-gun fire. Bruce Willis plays John McClane, a New York cop battling a group of European terrorists who are holding his wife (Bonnie Bedelia) and her co-workers hostage on the thirtieth floor of a gleaming L.A. skyscraper (actually the Fox Plaza in Century City). The action is so grandiose and relentless that it's funny. The director, John McTiernan, has the right style for this sort of cheerfully stupid, super-kinetic comic-book violence. The problem with "Die Hard" isn't so much the physical overkill of the production as the emotional overkill of the script (by Jeb Stuart and Steven E. de Souza, from a novel by Roderick Thorp). By the end, there has been so much onscreen applause for McClane that the picture's "humanity" seems narcissistic and fake, like Oscar-night sentimentality. Also with Alan Rickman, who gives the character of the terrorists' leader a wonderful slimy elegance.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Baronet; through Sept. 29.)

Ecstasy (1933)—The once scandalous Czech film, directed by Gustav Machaty and starring the very young Hedy Lamarr. It was originally intended to be called "Symphony of Love;" along with some explicit sexual sequences, there is symbolic erotic imagery that is romantic, poetic, and, despite its innocent absurdity, sensuous and exciting. The picture was banned and then released and then withdrawn and finally reissued, in so many different versions that everyone who talks about it appears to have seen (or imagined) different sex acts. Still, whichever "Ecstasy" one sees, it's delicately, tenderly erotic. In German. (Thalia SoHo; Sept. 29.)

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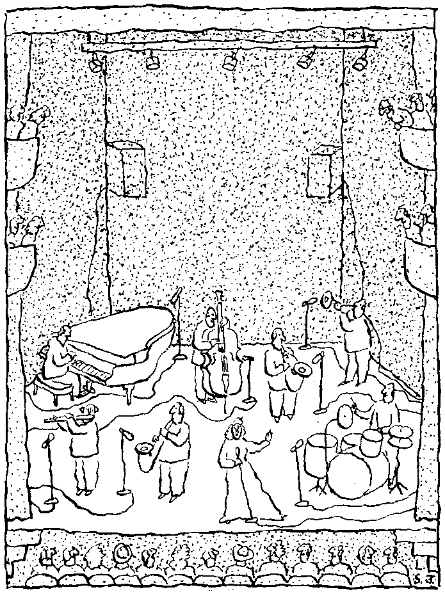
A Fish Called Wanda—This caper comedy promises to embody the best of two different styles of British humor: its director, the seventy-seven-year-old Charles Crichton, made "The Lavender Hill Mob," one of the greatest of the Ealing comedies, and its writer, executive producer, and star, the towering John Cleese, was a member of the Monty Python group and the creator of the hilarious television series "Fawlty Towers." Its main characters are a very proper London barrister (Cleese) and three jewel thieves: a crafty, sexy American woman named Wanda (Jamie Lee Curtis); another American, Otto (Kevin Kline), who's violently Anglophobic and dumb as dirt; and Ken (the ex-Pythonite Michael Palin), a deranged stutterer who's perfectly happy to bump off old ladies but becomes inconsolable at the death of a small dog or a tropical fish. The movie has a fair number of laughs, but Crichton's direction is too drab and poky for the material. Every time "Wanda" threatens to take off into the realm of insane, head-splitting farce, as "Fawlty Towers" so often did, something seems to drag it down—some impulse toward stability and restraint, at odds with the script's spirit of manic invention.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Heaven Can Wait (1943)—Ernst Lubitsch produced and directed this whimsical, uneven, yet generally disarming comedy of manners. Perhaps it isn't well known because it stars the rather drab Don Ameche, who appeared in many forced and charmless routine pictures, but here he's reasonably engaging. He plays a wellborn New Yorker, Henry Van Cleve—a lifetime dandy and stage-door Johnny—who thinks that his sexual improprieties are sinful and qualify him for Hell, but as he applies to Satan and tells his story we see his life in flashbacks and see his essential generosity and innocence. Gene Tierney plays the Kansas girl he steals from his stuffy cousin (Allyn Joslyn). With Charles Coburn, Marjorie Main, Laird Cregar, and Spring Byington. (Biograph Cinema; Oct. 4-5. . . . ¶ Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 5.)

The Hollywood Revue (1929)—M-G-M put this lavish revue together (it originally had Technicolor sequences) and threw in its biggest stars. Conrad Nagel and Jack Benny are the masters of ceremony; Joan Crawford sings; Marie Dressler and Polly Moran do a skit; Marion Davies sings and taps; Norma Shearer and John Gilbert do a flapper "Romeo and Juliet;" and so on and on. The quality is extremely variable, but the film contains so much of the history of popular theatre that it's invaluable. Charles Reisner directed. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 29.)



It Should Happen to You (1954)—Judy Holliday in a pleasantly erratic satirical comedy. The heroine, who yearns for celebrity, takes her life savings and places her name in giant letters across a billboard in Columbus Circle. Before long, she is as inescapably in the public eye as one of the Gabors. She also tosses about in romantic indecision. Should she give her heart to an honest documentary filmmaker (Jack Lemmon) and say farewell to the big time, or should she surrender herself to the sudsy embraces of a soap manufacturer (Peter Lawford)? Directed by George Cukor. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 29-Oct. 1.)

The King of Comedy (1983)—Robert De Niro plays Rupert Pupkin, a grossly insensitive, coldhearted deadhead who is determined to become a TV star like his idol, the comic Jerry Langford, played by Jerry Lewis. The director, Martin Scorsese, designs his own form of alienation in this mistimed, empty movie, which seems to teeter between jokiness and hate. With Sandra Bernhard, Diahnne Abbott, and Shelley Hack. (Thalia SoHo; Oct. 3.)

The Last Temptation of Christ—Martin Scorsese's film is based on an intense, rather ponderous novel by Nikos Kazantzakis that portrays Christ as a tormented prophet who has to choose between his human nature and his divine nature—who in order to fulfill his role as redeemer must reject the overpowering temptation to be merely a man. If we respond to anything in this movie it's to the idea of Scorsese wrestling with Kazantzakis's conception, thrashing manfully among the tangles of the novel's dense prose, trying to isolate some clear, intelligible meaning from this religious fever-dream. Scorsese hasn't managed to come up with a consistent visual style for the story, and the movie's intensity, over a span of two hours and forty minutes, is sputtering, fitful. The scenes meant to evoke the natural—the human—side of the story don't have much charge, and most of the actors look uncomfortable. (The drab modern idiom of Paul Schrader's dialogue is at least part of the problem.) This movie isn't a sacrilege; it's just an honorable mistake. With Willem Dafoe as Jesus, Harvey Keitel as Judas, Barbara Hershey as Mary Magdalene, and David Bowie as Pontius Pilate. Peter Gabriel composed the music.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Ziegfeld.)

Married to the Mob—Angela (Michelle Pfeiffer), the heroine of Jonathan Demme's crazy comedy, is married to an up-and-coming suburban gangster known as Frank the Cucumber (Alec Baldwin), and she doesn't feel good about her life; she's avid for ordinariness. When Frank is murdered by his boss, Tony the Tiger (Dean Stockwell), Angela gives away virtually the entire contents of her Long Island house and moves herself and her reluctant son into a cramped Lower East Side apartment, hoping that the mob will forget about her. Unfortunately, Tony the Tiger has the hots for her, the F.B.I. is tailing her, and Tony's insanely jealous wife, Connie (Mercedes Ruehl), is on the warpath. Pfeiffer's extraordinary performance is the movie's major pleasure; she makes both Angela's toughness and her goodness believable, funny, and touching. As usual, Demme is great at providing incidental pleasures, including a terrific score (with original music by David Byrne) and a superbly eccentric cast that features Matthew Modine, Trey Wilson, Joan Cusack, Tracey Walter, and David Johansen (as a priest). The vibrant cinematography is by Tak Fujimoto.—T.R. (8/22/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace. . . . ¶ Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; through Sept. 27. . . . ¶ Embassy; through Sept. 29.)

Matador—Hugely entertaining. Everything is eroticized in this lush, clownish comedy by Pedro Almodóvar. The characters act out

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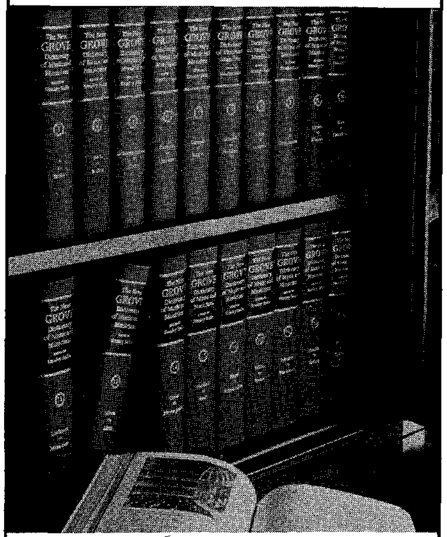

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

IN BRIEF—Cont'd

their wildest fantasies—or, like the handsome, wealthy young virgin Ángel (Antonio Banderas), try to act them out—and embarrass themselves. Ángel is training to be a bullfighter, but he faints at the sight of blood. He's such a supreme fantasist that he hallucinates and sees what happened in a recent series of murders. Unluckily, he's fantasist enough to think that he committed them. It's all sumptuously sick and funny, with hair ornaments used as daggers, tall women in swirling cloaks, and love rites performed on the matador's hot-pink cape spread fanlike on the floor. This trashiness has its own poetry and bravura. Assumpta Serna plays a culmination of the scarlet-woman tradition of Joan Crawford, Rita Hayworth, Ava Gardner, and Anouk Aimée—all those flaming man-killers with their too vibrant smiles. And Almodóvar himself appears as a mad-genius couturier who messes up his curly hair before he appears in public. Also with Nacho Martínez as the matador, Eusebio Poncela as the police inspector, Carmen Maura as the psychiatrist, and Eva Cobo, Julieta Serrano, and Chus Lampreave. Written by the director and Jesús Ferrero; cinematography by Ángel Luis Fernández. In Spanish. (5/16/88) (Cinema Studio.)

Midnight Run—At first, Martin Brest's new film is content to be a pleasantly flaky buddy movie and to lean on the talents of its two stars, Robert De Niro and Charles Grodin. De Niro's Jack Walsh, an ex-cop who works for a weaselly L.A. bail bondsman (Joe Pantoliano), goes to New York to retrieve a white-collar crook named Jonathan Mardukas (Grodin), an accountant who upon learning that the corporation he worked for was an organized-crime front embezzled fifteen million dollars and gave almost all of it to charity. They travel across the country in a succession of vehicles, dodging federal agents, hit men, and a profoundly stupid rival bounty hunter (John Ashton). De Niro gets marvellous effects by seeming to be constantly suppressing anger and powerful physical energy. Grodin, a minimalist and a miniaturist, does all his acting with sneaky looks and minute variations in the tone of his flat, dull voice, and he creates a memorable comic character—a placid solid-citizen type who's much wilier and crazier than he appears to be. The two actors look as if they were genuinely enjoying each other. But as they get close to L.A. Brest starts pumping up his sweetly funny road movie with large-scale action scenes—it's as if he were afraid that a pair of superlative actors doing low-key character comedy wouldn't be enough entertainment for us.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Manhattan Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, Olympia, and Warner; through Sept. 29.)

Moon Over Parador—Paul Mazursky's new comedy is awkward, dopey, and very likable. Richard Dreyfuss plays Jack Noah, a New York actor who is roped into impersonating the puppet dictator of a small Latin-American country called Parador. (The real President has dropped dead suddenly, at a very inconvenient time for the Paradorian powers-that-be.) The central joke isn't that politics is theatre but that Jack treats this volatile situation as if it were simply an acting challenge, way off Broadway: he sees everything in actors' terms. This premise is too elaborate for Mazursky, whose direction is clunkier than usual. But we're carried past the movie's many infelicities by Mazursky's affection for actors; he seems to love their ridiculous qualities most of all. And Dreyfuss, who's in almost every scene, is wonderful. There probably isn't another actor who could make Jack Noah so transparently full of himself and yet so appealing. The movie is disappointing, frustratingly unfocussed, but somehow charming—it's a lot like most actors, come to think of it. With Sonia Braga, Raul Julia, Jonathan Winters, and Fernando Rey. Mazursky himself (uncredited) plays the dictator's horrible mother, and practically steals his own movie. The script, by the director and Leon Capetanos, is based loosely on a 1939 Paramount film called "The Magnificent Fraud."—T.R. (9/19/88) (Art Greenwich Twin, and Carnegie Hall Cinema. . . . ¶ Bay Cinema, Manhattan Twin, and Metro Cinema; through Sept. 29.)

Running on Empty—Naomi Foner's screenplay is about the problems of a fugitive family: Mom and Dad (Christine Lahti and Judd Hirsch) have been on the run since 1971, when, as student activists, they helped blow up a campus building, not knowing that there was a man inside. They keep moving all over the country with their two sons (River Phoenix and Jonas Abry), changing their names and taking menial jobs so that they won't draw attention to themselves. The crisis comes when their older son (Phoenix), a musical prodigy, is noticed by a sympathetic teacher and encouraged to audition for Juilliard. The director, Sidney Lumet, buries everything that's original about the story, and leaves his hardworking performers bogged down in the mess, spinning their wheels. There's not a moment that feels authentic, not a scene that isn't marred by some jarring detail or inept camera placement or the omission of basic information that would make the characters' emotions comprehensible. Instead of attending to detail, Lumet pumps the story full of gross, Oscar-worthy sentimentality. Worst of all, he uses the Phoenix character's musical talent to validate the seriousness of the boy's plight—as though his problems would be less deserving of our attention if he weren't a prodigy. The movie is a glum fiasco. Also with Martha Plimpton, whose fresh, lively readings and expressions as the older son's girlfriend give some spark to most of her scenes.—T.R. (9/19/88) (8th St. Playhouse and Olympia. . . . ¶ Coronet, and National Twin; through Sept. 29.)

Ten Cents a Dance (1931)—In the role of a no-nonsense taxi dancer, Barbara Stanwyck fends off sailors and rough guys and raps out her lines believably, but the director, Lionel Barrymore, fails to shape the scenes, and the film drags heavily. Stanwyck marries a thieving weakling (Monroe Owsley), and then saves him from prison by borrowing money from a rich (and worthy) gentleman (Ricardo Cortez). When her ungrateful husband turns nasty, she quite sensibly leaves him and goes off to marry the gent. (Film Forum 2; Oct. 4.)

The Thin Blue Line—Errol Morris's trancelike almost lyrical documentary tells the story of a 1976 cop-killing in Dallas and examines the process by which a man who is almost certainly innocent was convicted and sentenced to death for the crime. The movie's form is circular, spiralling, its obsessive, repetitive visual motifs echoed in Philip Glass's hauntingly monotonous score. In showing us the lies, the fears, the social pressures, the ulterior motives, the stubbornness, and the plain confusion that combined to produce the case against the unfortunate Randall Adams—whose fate is worthy of a Borges hero—Morris seems to be investigating not just this squalid murder but the very nature of untruth. His style is occasionally too fancy and elliptical for absolute clarity, but this is a powerful and thrillingly strange movie. Morris—who actually uncovered new evidence in the course of making the film—has turned Randall Adams' case into a kind of tabloid poetry, a meditation on uncertainty and the fascination of violence.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Tom, Dick, and Harry (1941)—Ginger Rogers, a telephone operator, has three suitors: Alan Marshal is the millionaire of her dreams, George Murphy is a car salesman sure to get on in the world, and Burgess Meredith is a happy-go-lucky mechanic somewhat loose in the head. The movie is a series of sketches, as the heroine, trying to choose among them, dreams of her future life with each. (Her final choice leaves the viewer skeptical.) A nice detail: when she imagines marrying the millionaire, she sees newspaper headlines announcing her marriage; just under the large type there is a small heading, in quite insignificant type, reading, "Adolf Hitler Assassinated." Garson Kanin directed this Cinderella comedy from a script by Paul Jarrico. It's a little too jaunty and much too comfy in its stereotypical assumptions, but a lot of people enjoyed it. Phil Silvers turns up in a bit. (Biograph Cinema; Oct. 2-3.)

Topper (1937)—Much fun: a sophisticated fantasy, with Cary Grant and Constance Bennett as a high-stepping married couple, George and Marion Kirby. Killed in an automobile accident, they return as elegant, ectoplasmic pranksters and drive banker Cosmo Topper

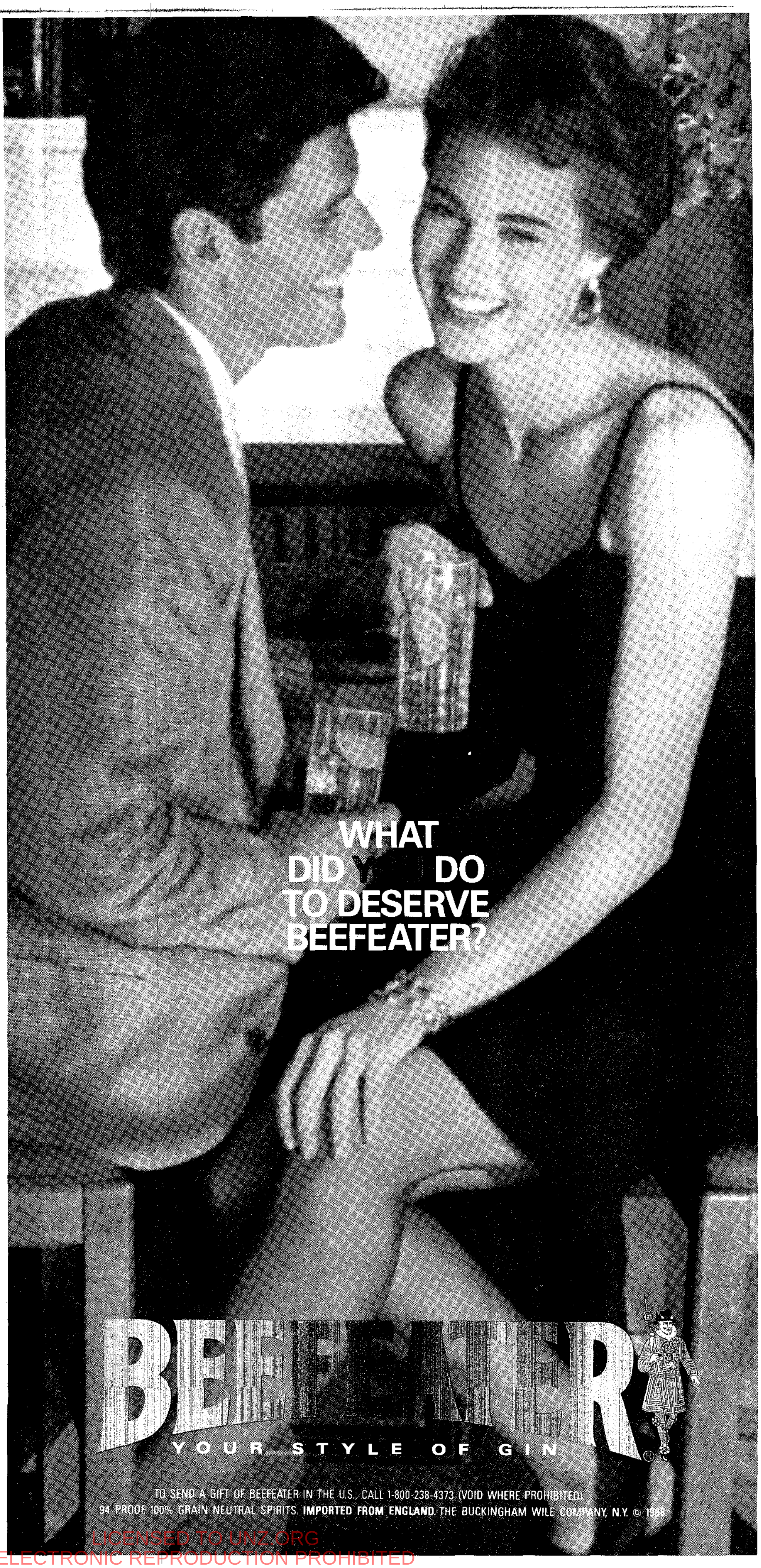
(Roland Young) to happy distraction. Norman Z. McLeod directed this adaptation of the Thorne Smith novel. For those who don't know why Constance Bennett was a big movie star, her provocative, teasing Marion Kirby should provide the answer. With Billie Burke, Alan Mowbray, and Hedda Hopper. (Biograph Cinema; Oct. 2-3.)

JCKER: THE MAN AND HIS DREAM—There are marvellous moments throughout Francis Ford Coppola's biography of Preston Tucker (Jeff Bridges), a Midwestern inventor/entrepreneur who tried, and failed, to manufacture and market an innovative new automobile in the late forties. The style of "Tucker" is hyped-up forties Hollywood, and we believe, at first, that its intent is ironic, that Coppola is playing with America's optimistic, movie- and magazine-fuelled vision of itself in the postwar years. Bafflingly, this style doesn't change, or even modulate, when Tucker's bold enterprise starts to come apart, undermined by pressure from the government and the big three auto companies; the movie remains grandiose and artificial—all golden lighting and low, heroic angles. "Tucker" collapses in nostalgia, bad faith, and Capra-style populism.—T.R. (8/22/88) (68th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace; through Sept. 27.)

HE UNINVITED (1944)—Ray Milland and Ruth Hussey are the brother and sister who buy a house on the Cornish coast only to find it inhabited by a spooky evil presence. Sexy-eyed Gail Russell never could act worth a damn, but she had an eerie lustre, and she's lovely as the mysterious young girl who helps in the exorcism. The picture was popular, though it doesn't come anywhere near fulfilling one's initial hopes that it will be a first-rate ghost movie. Lewis Allen directed. With Cornelia Otis Skinner, Donald Crisp, Alan Napier, Dorothy Stickney, and Barbara Everest. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 2.)

HO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT—This manic comedy, in which animated cartoon characters interact with live actors, is an amazing feat of entertainment engineering—like a Disneyland ride or a World's Fair movie. The setting is Los Angeles in 1947, and the screenplay, by Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman, takes off from the fairly witty conceit that the cartoon characters, called Toons here, are ordinary contract players in the already skewed universe of the Hollywood studio system. These strange creatures become involved in a conventional forties mystery plot, featuring a seedy, hard-drinking private eye (Bob Hoskins). The director, Robert Zemeckis, and his small army of animators and special-effects artists mean to pay homage to the Hollywood animation of the thirties and forties, but the movie doesn't have the right spirit. Technology and plot mechanics labor mightily to evoke an aura of freedom and uninhibited joy—yet there's hardly a spontaneous moment in the film. Also with Christopher Lloyd, Joanna Cassidy, and Stubby Kaye. The funniest Toon, Roger's sireny wife, Jessica, speaks with Kathleen Turner's (uncredited) voice and sings with Amy Irving's. The director of animation was Richard Williams. Adapted, very loosely, from the novel "Who Censored Roger Rabbit?," by Gary K. Wolf.—T.R. (7/11/88) (Embassy. . . . ¶ Cinema 3; through Sept. 28.)

INGS OF DESIRE ("Der Himmel über Berlin")—The director, Wim Wenders, who wrote the script with the collaboration of Peter Handke, has a theme: in an approximation of Rilke's words, "Joy has gone astray." We're told that "when the child was a child" stories held together. Now all we have is fragmentation, entropy. Two angels—Damiel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander)—hover over the bleak, divided city and move among the forlorn Berliners, listening to what's in their minds: listening to the questions about existence that these people ask themselves. Our overhearing what the angels hear—the thoughts chanted on the track, all in even, quiet tones, as grayed out as the sunless skies—works on us like a tranquillizer. Eventually, Damiel falls in love with a beautiful French aerialist (Solveig Dommartin), and gives up his wings. With Peter Falk, who brings some funky warmth to the role of an American movie star, and Curt Bois as a sad-faced old man called Homer. The cinematography (tinted black-and-white, and color) is by Henri Alekan. This Franco-German production is in English, French, and German. (5/30/88) (Cinema Studio.)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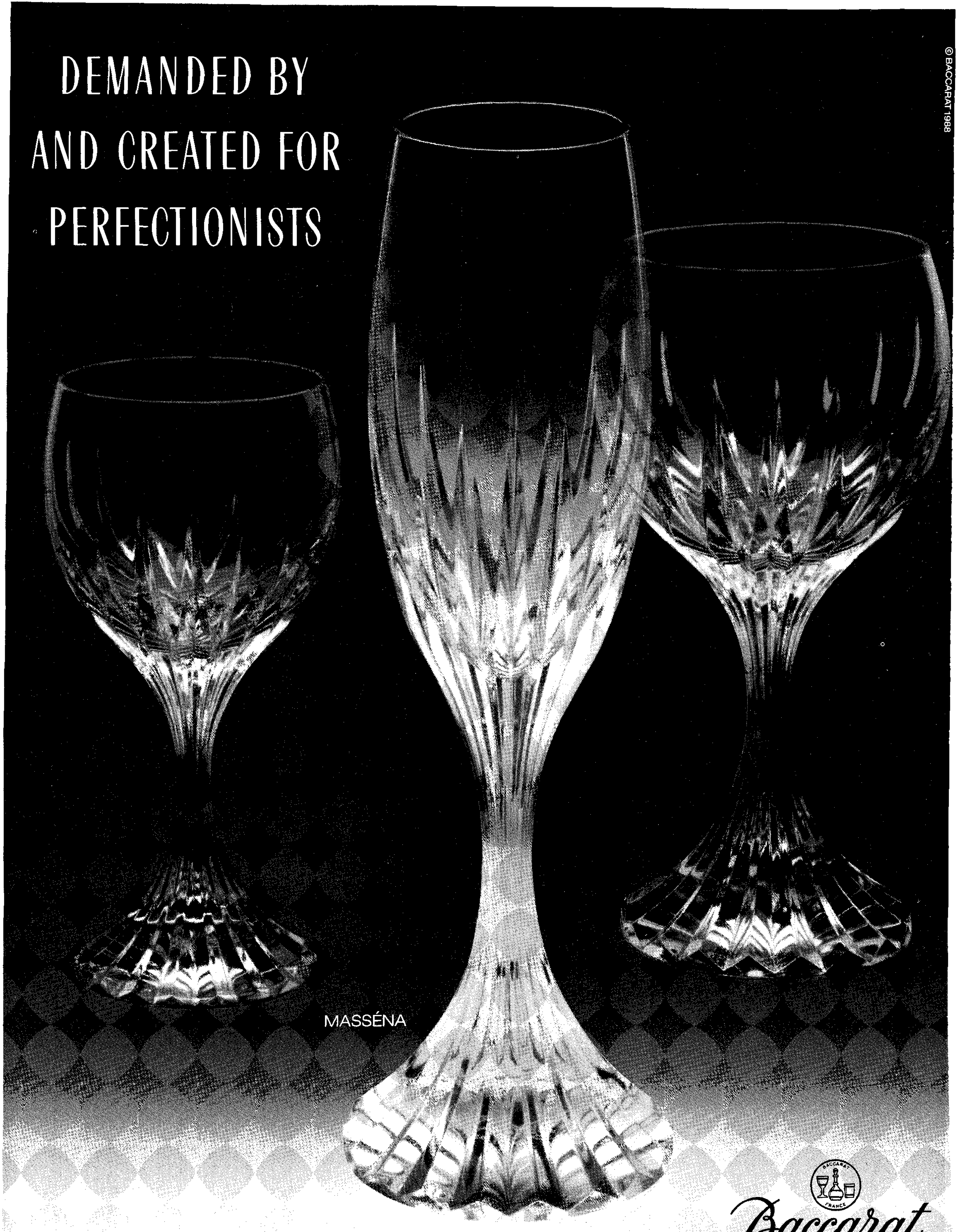
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

ON the day that Hurricane Gilbert was supposed to smack into the South Texas coast (with none of the radio and TV weather authorities seeming to know for certain whether Gilbert would come ashore close to the Mexican border or take a turn up toward Corpus Christi, a hundred and thirty miles to the north), the not very large town of Brownsville, Texas, which happens to be right on the Gulf and also right next to the Mexican border, was pretty well boarded up and shut down by noon.

By then, just about everything seemed tinged with gray and tending toward violence. The sky overhead—indeed, as far as the eye could see—was a mass of swirling gray clouds: not dark gray or black, as one might expect, but lightish gray, with a frothy, misty look. Rain was falling, and the wind was blowing in great gusts; branches and palm fronds were lying in the streets; a Texaco sign was dangling from its moorings above the entrance to a boarded-up gas station. The water in the Gulf was also gray—windblown and, for some reason, glistening, as if the sun were out. Police had already evacuated people from the resort and residential communities on nearby South Padre Island, which fronts directly on the Gulf, and a police car was stationed across the roadway to prevent anyone from going back—though by then the only people visible outdoors were the police and an occasional TV crew (occasional because most of the media army had stayed up in Corpus Christi).

One such crew, in a large blue-and-white communications van, was now being denied access to the island. "Listen, we'll just drive over, and do our thing quickly, and then we'll come back," the head TV guy was saying to the policeman, both men impressive in their yellow serious-weather slickers.

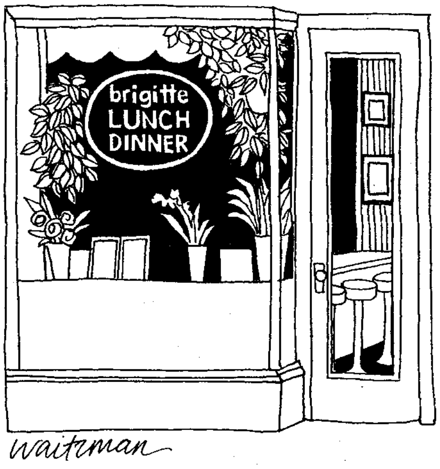
"Nothing doing," said the cop.

"I *promise*," said the TV guy.

"No," said the cop, and he climbed back into his police car to get out of the rain.

"That's a relief," the TV guy said to his cameraman. "Frank said he'd kill me if I messed up the equipment."

Over in the port of Brownsville, where there's usually a sizable traffic in commercial fishing boats heading out to look for shrimp and crab, all the boats were tied up, with the increasingly choppy water slapping at their sides, and the boats creaking and banging against the docks, and no one in sight except two brothers, Luis and Felipe, who were crouched in the wind and rain trying to protect the windows of a fishing boat named Esperanza with masking tape. "This tape's no damn good," said Luis.



"It's good," said Felipe, but without conviction.

By mid-afternoon, the rain was falling in earnest—not so much falling as blowing horizontally, and making it impossible to see and virtually impossible to stand. On the radio, somebody said that somebody else had said that gusts were getting close to seventy knots. "That's pretty much knots," said an extremely wet young man who was trying to use the only working public telephone at the Motel 6 to call his paper, back in the Rio Grande Valley. When he reached his editor, he told him of a recent statement by the mayor of South Padre Island to the effect that anyone foolish enough to stay at home instead of going to a public shelter should first go down to the police station and get his fingerprints on file. "What do you suppose he means by that?" the young man asked his editor. "He's going to *arrest* them?" The editor apparently thought otherwise. "Oh, I see, I see," said the young man.

Over in one of several shelters the town of Brownsville had set up, this one in a carpeted high-school basement, about two hundred men and women and innumerable children were lying down, sitting around, milling around, and otherwise trying to pass the time. "We shoulda stayed in the house," an elderly man wearing a red sun visor was saying.

"We couldn't have stayed," said a woman, also wearing a red sun visor, who was sitting on a camp chair.

A young woman doing her nails said, "I'm going to remember this always. You know, where I was during Hurricane Gilbert."

Across the room, a man in a blue

T-shirt said, "The eye of the storm just passed into Mexico."

Everyone was silent for a moment. Then people started to chatter. Some people applauded. The young woman said, "I don't know if I'm disappointed or not. What do we do now—do we leave?" A man appeared at the front of the room, clearly an authority figure, in jacket and shirt and necktie, and said, "It's important that everyone stay right here. There's a lot of storm outside. Winds are rising. Tides are coming up. There could be flooding."

It was true: the wind was really howling through Brownsville, and the rain kept driving in those horizontal gusts down the empty streets, where all the houses and businesses were boarded up tight with rectangles of plywood, the windows diagonally crisscrossed with masking tape. But even though the tide rose a good deal that night—about five feet above normal—it didn't rise the eight or ten feet that some had feared it would, and there was no flooding to speak of. "Brownsville got lucky," one of the TV newspeople said. "We must have been doing something right."

South of the border, across the International Bridge and down into Mexico, a lot of people were not so lucky, though whether from doing right or wrong is hard to say. In the town of Matamoros, where many of the Mexicans who work in Brownsville live, the streets were awash and debris was everywhere. There were few rectangles of plywood on the windows here, and not much in the way of masking tape. Some of the shops had a couple of rough pieces of wood nailed across their fronts, but there was little in the way of protection (or even the intention of protection) for the small dwellings against the roiling weather, which continued to squall and blow throughout the night. A man named Martínez stood waist deep in the muddy water outside his house, gathering what looked like pieces of cloth and clothing that had been blown into the water around him. "It's worse in La Carbonera," he said. Also true: about seventy miles south along the coast it was a good deal worse.

Ironically, twenty-two years ago, before Hurricane Beulah, a series of sandbars five miles out in the water had separated this part of the coast from the Gulf and its violent weather, but Beulah had washed the sandbars away, and in their absence several thousand Mexican fishermen and their families had settled in the area, forming little fishing villages: La Carbonera, Punta de Piedra, Punta de Alambre. This morning, they were in ruins—worse than in ruins. Many of the villages, with their flimsy shacks and their tin roofs and their fishing boats, had simply vanished. Fortunately, the inhabitants, or most of them, had been bused inland the day before, but some of them had come back and were standing about on the desolate beach, with sand now reaching into the tree line, and with the stormy water in the background (still glistening without any sunlight)—men and women and children wandering up and down, back and forth, looking for remnants of a life that had been literally blown away.

A hundred yards or so to the right, a quite substantial boat, a motor trawler of sorts, was resting, fat and bulky, on a sand dune. To the left, some people had formed a semicircle around a man named García, who had stayed behind in the village with his wife, and whose house had been destroyed during the night. "She wouldn't leave," he explained to his listeners in Spanish, as if telling them something that it might be valuable for them to know. "She said she would never leave, not for anyone," he said patiently.

"Where did you find her?" someone asked.

García pointed to the beach some distance away. "She was lying there," he said. Then he changed his mind and pointed farther to the left. "No, maybe there," he said. He looked at the people who were gathered around him, and then looked back at the sea, and for a moment nobody said anything.

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Moment

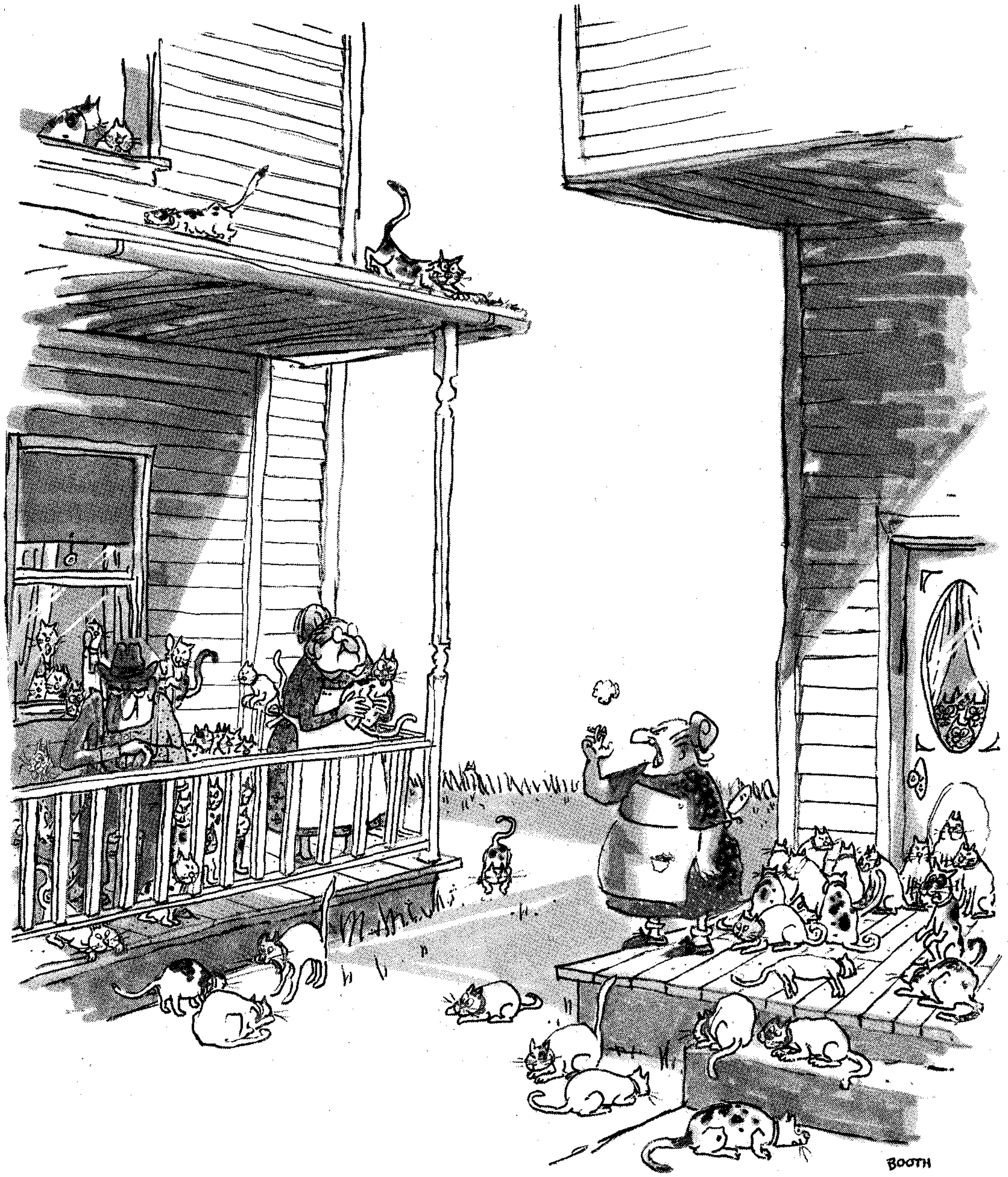
A FRIEND writes:

Ten, maybe fifteen, stirring moments a year are what sustain me in New York City. These moments arrive in serendipitous but not entirely unanticipated ways. Walking across Lincoln Center at five minutes before curtain time in the June dusk, when the light is silver and pink—a private epiphany, rooted in thankfulness for the anonymity that was never possible in the town where I grew up. Hurrying along a block in my own neighborhood and suddenly realizing that I'm hearing several languages spoken at once, none of which I speak myself. Jogging through stalled traffic near the Holland Tunnel on a Sunday afternoon, seeing on the faces of motorists and their passengers that quick-honey-lock-the-doors look, and marvelling that I, of all people, am perceived as a menace.

Then, of course, there are less uplifting moments, such as the moment last week when I discovered that a creep had broken a couple of not quite theftproof locks in my basement and removed my bicycle, a ten-speed Panasonic with high mileage. This morning, I bought a new bicycle and a couple of heavy-duty locks. As I handed the salesman the money, I set a mental stopwatch: How long will *this* bike belong to me before it becomes the possession of whoever eventually steals it? The previous bike lasted me seven years, during which parts of it managed to disappear—the seat once, wheels on three occasions. This time, I don't expect such good fortune: my new bike is so shiny, and bicycle thievery seems to be making important technological breakthroughs. My question is: Should I take these present and future depredations personally, the way I take my private epiphanies? There are *no* accidents—correct? I go back and forth on this issue.

A few months ago, in a parking lot along the Hudson River, my car, a six-year-old compact wagon, was broken into. Whoever did this stole a box of tissues and a little leather litter bag that hung from the radio. Then, evidently insulted by his haul, this ingrate decided to use another vehicle to ram my car on three sides. It looked like a stomped-on empty. The insurance settlement came to not much, but I managed to have the car fixed.

Six weeks after I got it out of the body shop, it was declared a total loss. That happened because I made the mistake of driving down an exit ramp from the Bruckner Expressway at the same moment that another driver, two cars ahead of me—perhaps a direct descendant of Albert Einstein, but perhaps not; I'll never know, because he fled the scene—got the urge to drive back up the ramp, in *reverse*. I skidded and plowed into the car that was between us, congratulated myself for wearing a seat belt, pulled over, rolled down my window, climbed out, and, as I hit the pavement, became highly aware that I was in the South Bronx, quite late on a rainy night, very near where Sherman McCoy's life starts to come unwound in "The Bonfire of the Vanities." (Instead of a mistress, I had with me at the instant of impact a head of lettuce and two loaves of homemade bread.) For about an hour, the driver of the car I had hit and I stood around with our hands in our pockets. Several cars slowed down and people stared at us, but no one offered to help. The joints of the Bruckner Expressway were sealed with asphalt. Where the asphalt was pitted, I could look down and see Bruckner Boulevard below. More holes in the infrastructure, I thought. Some cops showed up, and then a pair of tow trucks. I got into a tow truck with Larry. I was in the part of the Bronx where no one has a last name.



"Let's swap some cats today."

Larry drove me to a garage in the Hundred-and-Seventies. The only other person on the premises at that hour was a dispatcher sitting inside a yellow trailer. I didn't catch even his first name, but I assume it was Bluto. Several tow trucks were parked inside the garage, each endearingly inscribed above the radiator grille: "Gloria Wally Tommy," "Mr. Ed," "Doctor Jack." A black part-Labrador retriever slept on a chewed-up black vinyl sofa. Hanging from a beam, on a chain, was an indefinable thing—a two-by-four wrapped in shag carpeting, it seemed—that must have been a tool in the dog's phys-ed curriculum. Pieces of foam rubber lay on the garage floor. From the way the dog was snoring I got the impression he had overdosed on the furniture stuffing. All over the walls were signs listing the favors that Bluto and his colleagues were unwilling to perform.

I needed to make a phone call, so I went to Bluto's trailer. Bluto looked like a professional wrestler gone to seed and far beyond. He was using a two-way radio to lay some poetic invective on one of his drivers. Among Bluto's talents was the ability to employ the same indelicate modifier every third or fourth word and still sound imaginative. His radio sat on a table that was also equipped with a telephone and three video monitors, showing the sidewalk outside the garage entrance. On one wall of the trailer were a broken mirror, a photocopy of the cover of a back issue of *American Towman*, and a reproduction of the illustration for a story titled "The Job That Ate My Brain." When I asked to borrow the Yellow Pages, Bluto looked at me, didn't say a word, and looked away.

It turned out that there was a pay phone near the garage entrance. I used it to call my wife. I told her that this time the car was totalled once and for all, that I had met Bluto, and that she should start packing, because I intended to leave town soon and permanently. She gave me the number of a taxi service. While I was on the phone to the taxi service, trying to order a ride home and being told I would have to wait at least forty minutes, a yellow cab pulled up and a suntanned couple with Gucci luggage emerged—in that context, an absurdist apparition. I got in and gave the driver my address, in Lower Manhattan. He asked me what route I usually took, and I told him it was my first time in the neighborhood. When I explained why I was there, he said, "What a shame." A brown-and-white station wagon with lettering that said "Ten Fe Car Service" pulled out of a parking lot across the street. Other decals on the body translated "Ten Fe" from Spanish: "Keep the faith." This was too neat a coincidence to be convincing.

The cabdriver headed for the Cross-Bronx Expressway. A preview of the homeward-bound scenery—equal measures of the magical and the appalling things New York has to offer—flashed through my mind: flowers that Mary Lasker planted on Park Avenue; neighborhoods that God hasn't laid a finger on in far too long. As we crossed the Willis Avenue Bridge and entered Manhattan, I was hit with a rush of gratitude to Bluto. Earlier, standing on the exit ramp, cursing the phantom Einstein-in-Reverse, imagining the city collapsing under my feet, I had sensed myself going numb. Then I met Bluto—one more durable urban ornament—and I felt once again alive and alert. Another epiphany, then. "*Ten fe?*" I said to myself, reconsidering that idea and some other ideas. There are *no* accidents? What about accidents—are accidents accidents? What should I take personally? Should I leave or stick around? As of today, I'm still here, counting moments.

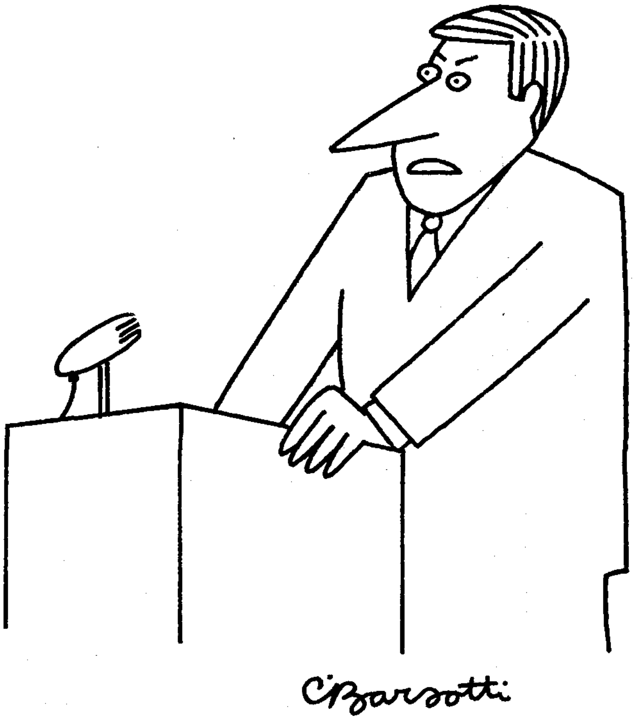
Party of Canines

WILLY, a fox terrier we know, was invited to a party on the Upper East Side the other evening, and we went along. The invitation had arrived in the mail a couple of days before. It said that the Corner Bookstore requested the pleasure of WILLY'S—his name was hand-lettered in red ink—company "at a canine buffet on Wednesday, the fourteenth of September, from five until seven o'clock." We normally cast a cold, half-lidded eye on stunts of this kind, but we have such a high opinion of the Corner Bookstore that we felt we could safely assume that what we were dealing with here was not a stunt but a sober social occasion. The Corner Bookstore, which sits inconspicuously on the corner of Ninety-third and Madison, is the kind of bookstore where you can console yourself just by looking at the backs of all the Trollope novels you have yet to read, or feel cheered up by gazing at the long stretches of Penguin Classics titles, a sea of orange and black.

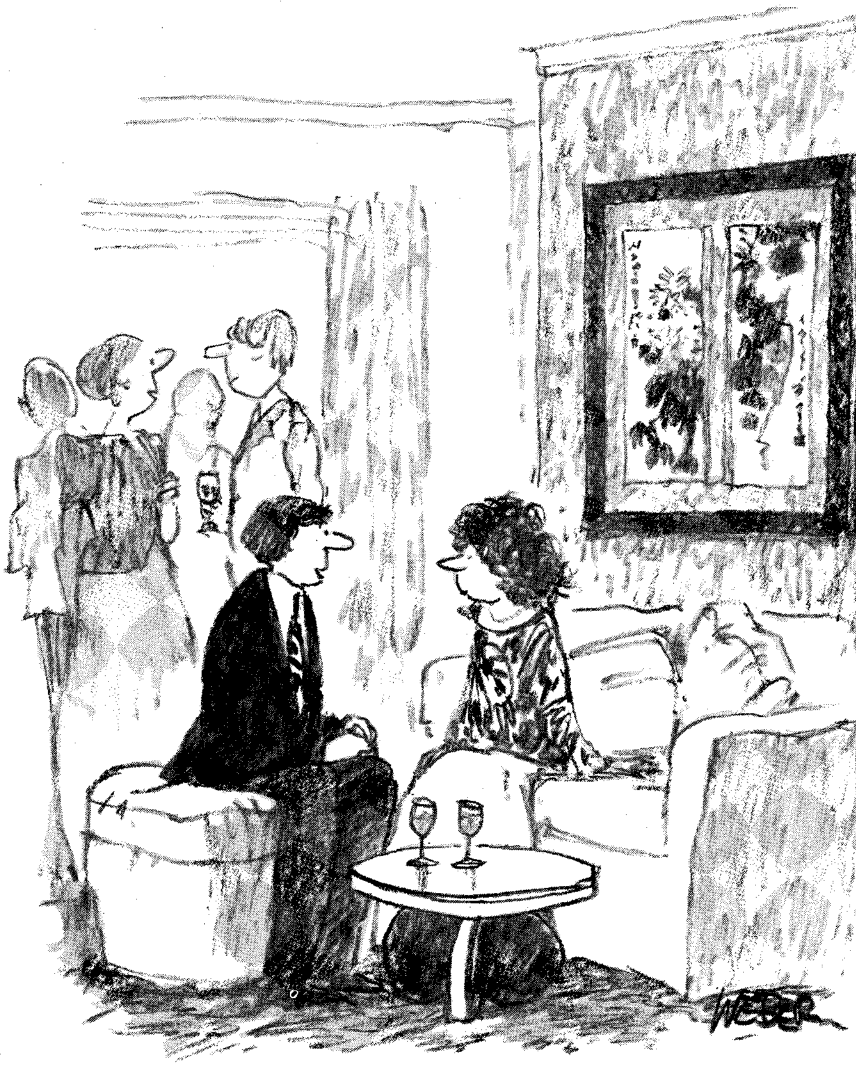
We went to the party with Willy, with Carol, his date, and with Jock, a cairn terrier who carries himself as though someone had once told him he was a dead ringer for Toto. Approaching the corner of Madison and Ninety-third, we heard the dogs of the Upper East Side before we saw them. (Madison in the Nineties is one of the few places where you have a sense of the essential hilliness—even hill-and-daleness—of Manhattan. The neighborhood is actually called Carnegie Hill by preservationists and realtors.) Dogs everywhere: beautiful dogs, perfectly groomed dogs, fashionable dogs. *Nothing* but fashionable dogs: springer spaniels, chows, golden retrievers, chocolate Labs, English bulldogs (two), and beautiful, dignified, aggressively unclipped poodles. We did not see a single German shepherd, Scottie, dachshund, or beagle.

Many of the dogs, sensing the occasion, tugged their owners toward the sidewalk in front of the bookstore, where the Corner Bookstore people had set up a canine buffet—water, gourmet dog biscuits, and freeze-dried liver, which is apparently the chèvre of the dog world.

We expected the scene to look like the last reel of a Mack Sennett comedy; instead, it reminded us of the happier parties in Proust. The dogs seemed genuinely glad to see each other. Tails wagged; noses were licked and hindquarters sniffed. A spaniel backed away uneasily and hid under a bench that sits outside the bookstore, but then his mistress lured him out with a trail of dog biscuits, and when he was finally coaxed up to a communal water dish he let out a sharp, contented bleat. For a bookstore party, it all seemed



"And I think I speak for an entire generation when I remind my opponent that that was then and this is now."



"I'm learning to capitalize on my faults."

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unusually placid. There was no backbiting.

Some dogs hung back, unsure. On the corner of Ninety-second we met Maggie, who introduced us to her two charges and outlined their problems. "This is my brother Jeff," she said, indicating a nine-year-old boy in a Filmore East revival outfit—tie-dyed green T-shirt, green socks, and green sneakers. "He's obnoxious," she said, without rancor. Jeff belched obligingly, to demonstrate. "This is Rocky," she went on, indicating a cocker-spaniel puppy, "and she's never been to a party before. She's so nervous. Jenny, has she ever been this nervous before? I've never seen her so nervous." Jenny was a young woman walking with them.

"Do you want to see Rocky's trick?" Jenny asked. She ran to the buffet, ran half a block away, held up a tidbit of freeze-dried liver, and said, "Up, Rocky, up?" Rocky circled around, distracted. Finally, Jeff picked Rocky up, and Jenny handed her the liver.

"Oh, you clever girl!" Maggie said as she and Jenny hugged the little dog. They looked down the block at all the dogs socializing around the buffet. "We'll wait," Maggie said, decisively. "Let her just *see* all the other dogs."

"Oh, Maggie, she'll feel like a *wallflower*," Jenny said, with emotion. "She may never get over it." Jeff belched again.

Lavinia, who is four and a half, was there with her nanny, Rosalyn, who comes from Antigua. Lavinia lives on Madison Avenue, but her schnauzer, Chester, has been banished to Vermont. According to Lavinia, she and Chester have been separated by her parents—like the lovers in an eighteenth-century novel, we gathered. "Chester isn't here," she told us sadly. "He bites people. He bit my little sister. She pulled his hair, and so he bit her." Lavinia's little sister was nearby, in a stroller; Lavinia looked at her. "It's wrong for Chester to bite my little sister, and I'm sorry," she said. She didn't look sorry. She asked us to get her some popcorn—there was popcorn and wine for the people—and we did. Then she went into the bookstore, got a book, brought it outside, and sat down on the bench. "I'll read this book," she explained to her nanny, "and if we like it, then we'll buy it." The book was about the honeymoon of two alligators. She began to turn the pages, indifferent to all the dogs who were climbing over and under and around the bench, sniffing and nuzzling. Lavinia is a one-schnauzer girl.

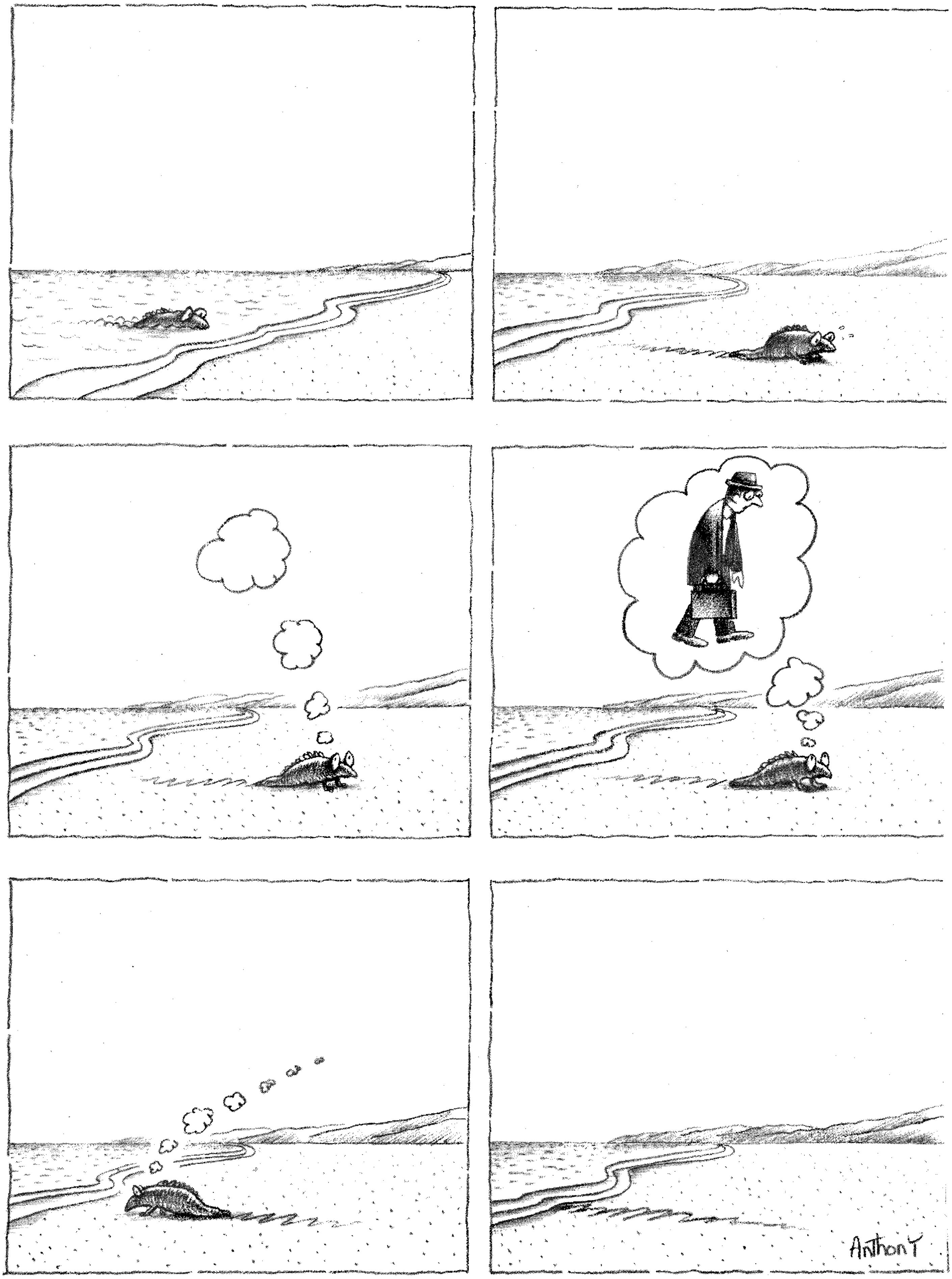
We met Penelope and Amanda, who were there with Gail and Ira Mason. Penelope is an English bulldog; she was wearing a Pierre Deux scarf, and she had a leash that said "I ♡ MY BULLDOG." Amanda is a blue-eyed Siberian husky.

We met another Penelope, this one a Chihuahua, who was there with Crystal, a toy poodle. Both Crystal and little Penelope belong to Irene, who lives on the Upper East Side and sells real estate there. "They've never attended a party before," she told us. "But they've been to several play-ins on the Upper East Side."

We asked what a play-in was.

Irene said, "A play-in is an Upper East Side thingy where— Let's say, you meet two dogs in the park, out on a run, and then you say, 'You could bring them over to play with Posy.' The dogs help me with my listings."

Sigrid, who is from Germany, was there. She had come to buy a copy of Hofmannsthal's "The Lord Chandos Letter," and, surprised by the party, she analyzed it for us. "Look," she said. "There are two parties here. The five-and-a-half-foot party, where all the people are making small talk and drinking wine. And then there is the two-foot party, where all the dogs are. Look. The dogs want to do only three things—eat, make love, and fight. Watch them! They sniff for a bit. They are making up their minds to fight or make love. Then, the moment they summon up the will to act, the owner notices, hardly looking, and—yank!—they're pulled back into decency. It's the battle of the superego and the id right here on the corner. Canine civilization and its discontents. And where are the people's leashes?"


Anthony

SECRETS OF OUR PYRAMID

(JIM AND MIMI ARBUTHNOT REPLICATE THE GREAT PYRAMID OF CHEOPS ON THE ARKANSAS RIVIERA)

"LIGHT is the cheapest commodity in the physical world." Jim Arbuthnot speaking, from somewhere nearby in the Stygian gloom. "And air is so boring. Everybody has it." That's wife Mimi, who lends style even to the act of gasping for breath. Mix these rock-hard Arbuthnot precepts, Jim's lifelong fascination with the scene on the Camel cigarette pack, and a 1981 stopover in Egypt en route home from helping Mimi's dad to sell Dubai, and hey, presto—the most intriguing weekend retreat ever to rise, twenty-ton limestone block by twenty-ton limestone block, on the west bank of the Mississippi.

"What it's all about is authenticity. We even had to import the scarabs." Mimi wields a six-foot pitch torch while flicking an errant bat out of her coiffure as naturally as if she'd been doing it all her life, not just the few brief weekends she and Jim have been able to steal away from their beloved tree-house aerie in the Norwegian fir forests—itself a retreat from Tammy, the Arbuthnot aircraft carrier-cum-houseboat currently moored ("I *think*," Mimi uncharacteristically vacillates) in the Bay of Naples, in turn a necessary change of space and pace from the working oryx ranch and family seat, Marzipan, just up the road near Pine Bluff.

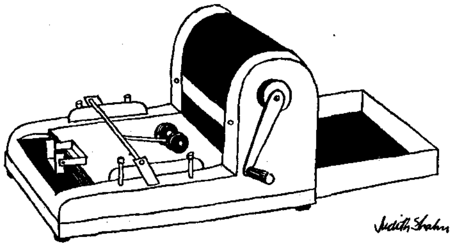
We thread our way along zigzagging corridors single file. Jim and Mimi had laid down one dictate only in the design stage: that the edifice they joshingly dubbed "Cheopstyx" contain more rooms than could be counted in a day. So Mimi's pride in almost immediately stumbling upon the dining room is palpable. "There were no kitchens in Cheops' pyramid," Jim notes, wearing his erudition as lightly as his cologne. "So we order out Chinese a lot," Mimi adds, weaving deftly into the conversational skein. "We'll pretend Confucius has come to supper with the Pharaoh, and we'll try to chat about what they'd have chatted about," interjects Jim, shark-bomber man of action gone suddenly all reflective.

"Because," says Mimi, wedging in her trademark last word, "this place gets one in its grip. It isn't about the quotidian, it's about important people, immortal people, people with a great deal on their minds." "People," grace-notes Jim here in the perfectly re-created hush of aeons, "who lived a long time ago."

Now it's Jim leading the way through the higgledy-piggledy corridors. Arkansas-football-nut Jim collaborating with historic-accuracy-nut Jim to emblazon "Go Razorbacks!" five feet high in authentic Egyptian hieroglyphs on the walls. Jim the globe-girdling collector of Fourth Dynasty funerary bric-a-brac stashing it all here in the Sacred Antechamber, where Jim the insatiable media freak likes to curl up après-supper to catch old episodes of "Taxi" or "Barney Miller" on TV.

"Actually," Jim muses, coiling his lanky frame into a gold-leafed chair meant for a Ptolemaic princeling, "I'm studying the similarities between today's TV and ancient Egyptian religion. It's fascinating: they believed you never really die, your soul just kind of goes into syndication. So they invented the principle of the rerun a good four thousand years before Viacom. Fascinating." Pale TV light flickers over mummified cats and model funeral boats and sarcophagi in the fetid dark. And Jim Arbuthnot, men's medal-play golf champion of Antarctica, involuntarily shivers.

"And here's where I do all my telephoning." Mimi presses on a section of corridor wall and—*mirabile dictu*—a secret door gives way to reveal dozens of tiny ruby lights winking in the cozy crypt within. Mistress of the serendipitous, Mimi miraculously recovered the switchboard from the late King Farouk's Cairo palace at an auction in Maracaibo last spring.



"I'm not a gabber," Mimi insists. "I only talk, never listen. 'Only talk, never listen.' Coco Chanel said that to me, I think. I've never forgotten it, even though, strictly speaking, I shouldn't have been listening. Do you follow? You know what they say about what you don't know not hurting you. And there is *so* much *hurt* in the world."

But if she is mistress of serendipity, Mimi Arbuthnot also reigns as empress of the eclectic when it comes to assembling a home. We are in the suite of rooms corresponding to the tomb of Cheops deep inside Cheopstyx. Here a grandfather clock, there a row of deck chairs from the old Cunarder R.M.S. Berengaria; there a Rauschenberg, here a Pawnee Indian wickiup. Art Deco cheek by jowl with Second Empire, Mogul intermixed with Ming. Bowls of money, bowls of flowers, bowls of antique bowling pins. And it all madly, gladly, preternaturally works.

As, for Jim and Mimi Arbuthnot, Cheopstyx both as idea and as weekend retreat plainly works. "I'd never use slave labor again." Jim half smiles, half grimaces, as if recounting a particularly gruelling round of his beloved deep-sea water polo. "And it has cost us a couple of very dear friends," Mimi recalls. "They came to weekend, must have taken a wrong turn down around the southeast corridor. We never saw them alive again. But . . ."

But such rue is ultimately unconvincing; Jim and Mimi know they have it made in the shade here in their six hundred million square royal cubits of hideaway; know that that magical click when special people make themselves a special place has clicked for them. Will, for them, always and ever and ever click. One takes one's leave down the long, palm-lined avenue and boards Tammy Too, the motorized funeral barge waiting to convey one back to the dreary quotidian. And one finds oneself conjuring a last irrepressible image.

It is of the afterlife, and a mellow Arkansas summer evening, and a dinner party at Cheopstyx. There is Cheops, and there is Confucius, and there in the center of everything are Jim and Mimi Arbuthnot, passing around the takeout Chinese, and chatting the chat of the ages. —BRUCE MCCALL

THE GOOD MAN

BY falling down the stairs and rattling the rail supports, Long wakes Andrea, a displaced Angeleno, who thinks, Earthquake, and bolts into the hall just as Long arrives there, his swollen face coming to rest on her pale, bare feet. This is how Long meets his wife, who, ten years and two children later, tacks an unopened envelope from the Chicago Bank to the kitchen door and writes a note on the back, terse as a slap, “Goodbye, you shit.” With daughter Leslie by the hand and baby Tim cradled in arm, Andrea leaves Long.

He smokes, sitting in boxers at the Formica table beside the dieseling refrigerator, turning the envelope with his fingers—the same motion he once used to roll joints. Inside the envelope is a notice of bounced checks: Fenwick Liquors, Atcheson’s Drugs, the Spot Market, Fenwick Liquors, Lou’s Barbecue Ribs. Reading it, finally, after crumpling the envelope in anguish, Long decides to quit drinking.

He empties long-necked bottles into the sink, inhaling the odors, which strike him like memories: elusive, sweet, more shadow than substance. He remembers an afternoon from early in their marriage, a Saturday celebration after his first week as a reporter for the Chicago *Tribune*. The sunlight is the color of lemonade, and Andrea, in a stodgy green bikini that almost covers her navel, runs toward him along the water’s edge, the beach on Lake Michigan glistening like the feathers of an exotic bird.

“The water’s heaven.” She tinks her voice—a little rising squeak to end each sentence. “I just love this,” she says, tinking, her smile brighter than the sun.

Long, four beers closer to home than she, lies barebacked on a rust-colored towel too short for the beach, his skin radiant with love for his wife, blistering with love. “Come here,” he says. Stretching his arm, taking her hand, he pulls her to him as if there’s nothing to it, as if to say, Why are so many people lonely, anyway? “You’re the best.” He kisses her lush, hard mouth. “Drink a beer with me,” he says. Then he says, “This is the best moment of my life.”

TWO years later, the day his story in the *Tribune* runs drunk with errors and he and his editor are fired, Long pauses on the sidewalk and leans against the newspaper building’s brick wall, mind clouded by one part vodka and two humiliation, struggling with cigarette and match, fingers shaking. His editor, in raincoat and gray hat, an electric pencil sharpener in one hand, briefcase and a framed photograph in the other, deposits his belongings on the sidewalk and straightens Long’s collar, then lights the impossible cigarette. Lifting the frame to show Long, he says, “Jerry, Jeff, James,” his finger pausing at the miniature faces of his sons.

“I’m sorry,” Long says.

His editor nods, staring into the photograph. “Jeff is squinting,” he says sadly. “In every picture we have, Jeff is squinting.”

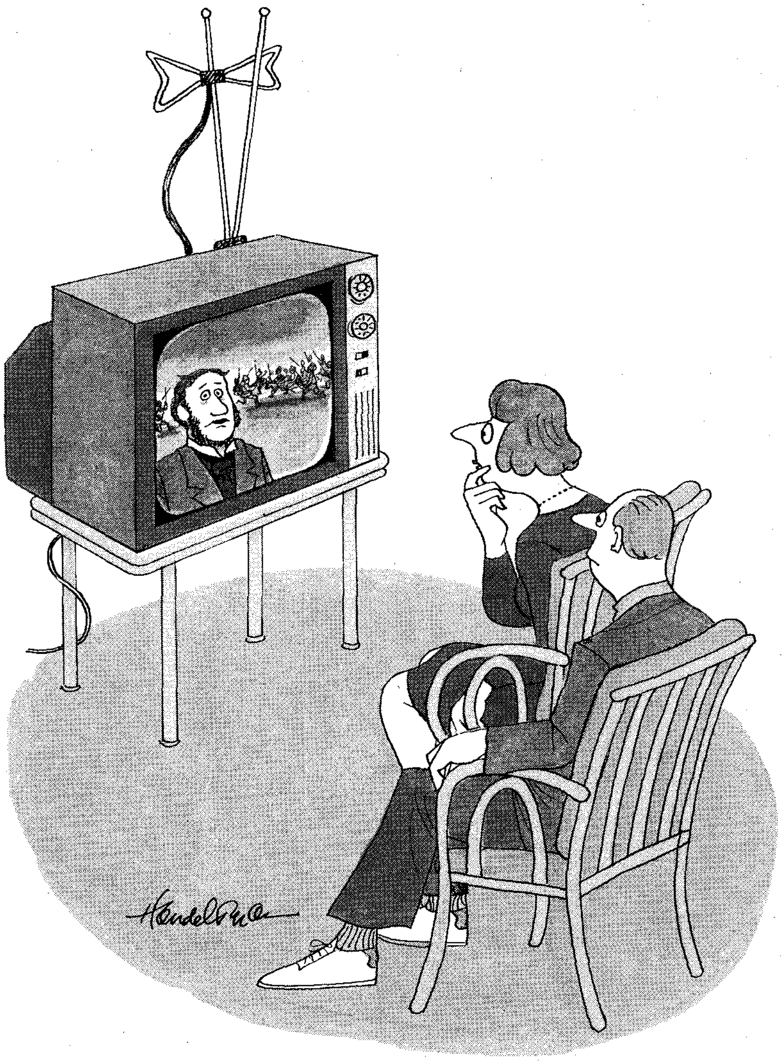
“You won’t have trouble finding work,” Long assures him.

His editor presses the photograph to his chest. “You will,” he says.

Long is wounded by this but does not feel pain. The muscles in his arms, the sweetness at the center of his chest, the glowing cores of his legs already sing to him the melody of desire, the haunting bodily chorus of drink.

Negrophile, Chicago South Side whore hunter before he fell on the bare feet of Andrea, Long heads for a jazz bar, remembering the cold afternoon years earlier when he had stumbled across Coltrane playing there for almost nobody, blowing like he owned the air, like sound was something wasted by others.

This time, the bar has nothing playing but the stoic talk of bartender and barmaid, both black, who remember him from other times. “Hey,” Long says. Bartender smiles. Barmaid takes his elbow, her perfume straightening his spine. There are little bulges beneath her eyes, and her nose is the shape of a squatting child. Long remembers sleeping with this



“Here as on a darkling plain swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, where ignorant armies clash by night, Matthew Arnold, Fox News, Channel Five.”

woman a week before he met Andrea. She sits him in a green vinyl booth. "I just got axed," he says.

"I'd say you look more tanked than axed," she tells him. "Vodka Collins?" she says. "Rum and Coke? Double Henry straight up? Highball? Boilermaker? What day of the month you drinking now?"

"Surprise me," he says, pulling the ballpoint from between her breasts. He scrawls numbers, black and crooked, on a white napkin. "Call my wife," he says. "When I'm good and drunk."

"Pity the girl who be your bride," she tells him, then makes the call before she brings him anything.

Andrea arrives in jeans and sandals, her little fists jammed into her back pockets, calling him Honey, pleading with him to come home, crying, finally, before he agrees to go. He says, "I've come to no good."

And she, "Don't."

A year and a half later, Long, now a copy editor for Lendel, Lendel, Holmes & Marquesee, hating the ties and jackets of the young lawyers, the sparkling black shoes of the old ones, takes Andrea, six months pregnant, to a dinner party at a senior partner's house. The high, gabled windows, the door's low black transom incapacitate Long even before the maid, better dressed than he or his wife, says, "Circle round back. You're forty-five minutes late. Manny is going to hear from me."

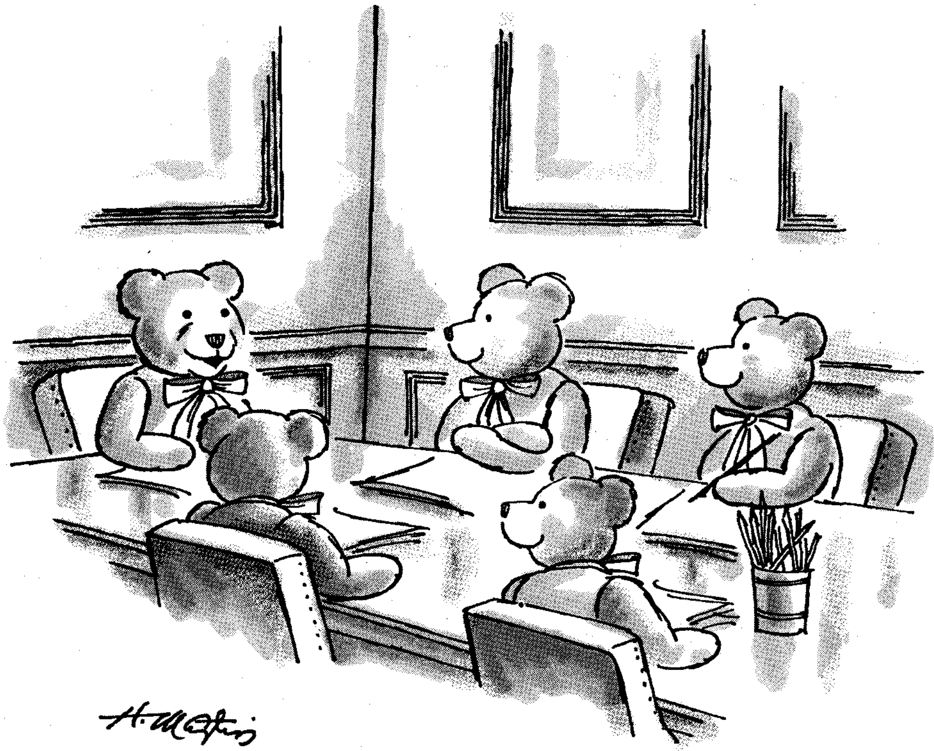
"We're guests," Andrea says, but Long cannot enter. Sober, hateful, and intolerably sad, Long lists back to their Nova.

"What's come over you?" Andrea asks him.

"I can't go in there." He speaks into the crook of his arm and the roof of the car. Believing the weight of his sorrow may crush the Nova's top, he straightens long enough to crawl inside and lie face down on the front seat.

Andrea goes around the car, opens the door, takes his head into her hands gently, as if it were an overripe squash, bruised and too soft to eat. "That woman is a foolish bitch," she whispers. "Don't let her spoil our night."

Long, wishing to explain his sudden and impossible fatigue, the weight and dimension of his sadness, forms his mouth into the tent that will become his wife's name, but begins instead to weep—a convulsive breath-sucking stammer of mucous and tears.



"I think, gentlemen, it's time to plan the annual picnic."

Andrea flattens her hands against the back of his head, thrusts against it into the groaning seat. "You bastard," she says. She thrusts again, says, "You shit." She wipes the oil of his hair onto his gray jacket and whips the door shut. "Stay here," she tells him. "Rot here." She walks with the conviction of a priest to the great transomed door, while Long, still crying, nose broken and bleeding, lip split and bleeding, gasps for air.

Before he can stop crying, his chest coughing forward still, with the rhythm of a dying locomotive, the car door opens and Andrea lifts his head into her hands again. "Here, my baby," she whispers, an offering sweating in her hand, leaving a circle on the maternity corduroy. Vodka and water, a tall glass, clear as sanity, its opening a perfect circle. A second vodka rests on the asphalt by Andrea's stockinged foot.

He drinks.

LONG hallucinates and searches the bathroom cabinet for cold medicine or cough syrup. He does not leave the apartment, which has expanded now, growing first with his family's absence and now with his delirium, the white shoulders of the bathtub swelling wide as a car, bedroom corners stretching obtusely, becoming almost round, cupboards blooming at his touch—great flowers whose nectar he cannot locate. There are a thousand places in his apartment where the members of his family do not reside, a million places where there is no liquor.

Without Andrea, without his children, without drink, he is clothes without consciousness. Gravity exerts no pull. He wakes screaming, clawing maggots from his arms, and cannot run to the bathroom to puke because he slept on the ceiling. Vomit trails from his mouth to the bed far below and becomes his face, a monster of his own making. His elbows bleed from the falls, ceiling to floor.

When he is capable of movement once more, Andrea begins to call from the next room at regular intervals. He always looks; she is never there. Shaking himself from madness, he seeks her. He shoves his face into the kitchen sink, inhaling, but the odors of alcohol are gone.

Asleep, he is sane, dreaming his life, talking with Andrea about the noises of furniture, the creaks and ticks, imitating them as best he can, laughing. She tells him the story of her deaf grandmother, who telephoned to say that her soup this morning from a can red and white like the flag needed not even water: open, pour, heat. "Isn't this the life?" she'd say, then talk about the headlines, the funnies, the photographs of famous people page after page. "For a quarter. How can you beat it?" she'd say, then read Royko word for word, the receiver on the other end resting on the kitchen counter, holding the pages of Andrea's cookbook open.

In the dream, they talk of the future; in the dream, they have one. Schools not good enough for their Leslie, how they will keep Tim from becoming macho, the route they will drive to California come summer—the endless, banal, and mysterious details of the life Long loves.

He wakes to madness.

TWO weeks into a stay of eight at the rehabilitation center, Long receives forms to sign—forms already bearing the slip and glide of Andrea's hand. Her signature stops his breath. She cohabits his dreams—sharing his narrow bed, cursing the thin striped mattress, the antiseptic smell, the gurgle of television voices—but this signature, so specifically Andrea, so deeply real, mocks the dreams and makes his bowels ache.

Long studies the pages for an address, removing paper clips, reading confidential reports of doctors and counsellors, who refer to him as "Client Long," coming finally to a stark page of familiar script, labelled "Spouse's Report." He reads.

> My husband has been a big drinker since before I knew him. He drinks mornings, afternoons, nights. He was drunk when we married. He lost jobs by working drunk, but he always found new ones. He is a kind man, and people like that. He's not an ugly drunk. When he is a little tipped, he's funny, but that only lasts a while. How he got this way is some mystery there doesn't seem an end to. He loves his children. He loves me. He could have been a good man.

Long tears the report twenty times. A dull-eyed nurse, entering the room with a compartmentalized tray of food, screams at him as if he had threatened her. "You can't read this!" she says, snatching the papers. "You were just supposed to put your name!" Then, "I could lose my job."

He apologizes, smiling, having found, before her entrance, the phone number of his wife and an address in Joliet. The nurse gathers the scraps, slips them into the pockets of her uniform, directs an index finger at his wicked grin. "Don't you tell," she says, glaring, then smiling. "I mean it," she tells him, glaring again.

DREAMING ABOUT THE DEAD

You'd think they'd just been out for a casual stroll
and found themselves by chance on the old street,
the old key still in their pocket, the way

they're sitting at the kitchen table when you come in.
Don't you believe it. They've obviously spent hours
arranging for the light to fall with that

phony lambency,
and haven't you noticed how slyly
they look at you when they think you're not looking at them?

True, it seems strange that they would come so far
to warn you against the new girl in the office
or give you a recipe for worms on toast,

but try it, interrupt, say *Mirror of ashes*,
moonless heart—they'll only
smile a little vaguely, start hunting for matches,

and suddenly the black car's at the door.
Will you come back? you call out after them.
Oh, definitely, no problem there. Again

and again, until
you learn they will never say what you need them to:
My death was mine. It had nothing to do with you.

—Katha Pollitt

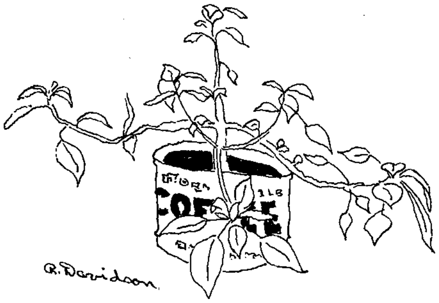
• •

He says, "I need to place a call."

Shaking her head, she says once more, "I could lose my job." Then she adds, "Family?"

He nods.

LONG lifts a quarter from the puddle of coins on his lap and slips it into the pay phone. His chair faces the wall. The nurse smokes a cigarette furtively and paces the hallway.



Andrea answers after the second ring.

"Andy," Long says, "how I've missed you, you don't know. How are you? How have you been? Haven't had a drink since you left. Not one. Neighbors called the police. You must know that. Not a drop. Don't you want to see me? Don't you want to talk? I could still be a good man."

"You weren't supposed to see that," she says, angry or embarrassed or pretending—Long needs to see her face to know. He listens while she breathes into the phone, just breathes. "Leslie cut her thumb," she says. "It's not serious. A little nick."

"And Tim? How is Tim?"

"Tim is fine. It's Leslie. She misses you. She doesn't understand."

"*I* don't understand," he says. "Oh, I do, but everything has changed. I'm better. I'm getting better."

"I took them to the beach," Andrea tells him. "It was too crowded. You wouldn't believe the mess people make."

"You miss me," Long says. "You

want to give it another chance."

She doesn't say anything, then she says, "I don't know."

"You know," he says. Then he says, "You know."

Long leaves the center in a wheelchair to please the nurses, who claim to be pleasing invisible insurance companies. Andrea pushes the chair, Leslie clutching her skirt. Long holds baby Tim in his arms.

They move to Arizona, where Long has found work as a reporter through the mail and over the phone. The pay is bad; the desert hot. Andrea misses trees, grass, rain, snow, but mostly trees: oaks, maples, birches, the dying elms. Sometimes she misses Long, the way he used to be. In her purse is a scrap of paper, a phone number she dials when she misses her husband and has to let someone know.

Together, they go to meetings. Andrea talks of her happiness and her yearning; Long says it's getting through the morning, if he can just make it through the morning. The others at the meeting say the same things or different things that mean the same.

Tim gets heat rash and no longer sleeps through the night. The doctor gives them a cream and white powder. They buy a tiny electric fan and attach it to his crib. Leslie breaks her leg falling from her tricycle—a fall that shouldn't have left a bruise. A white cast, calcium supplements.

"I hate to see them unhappy," Andrea tells Long, her voice tinking as if she might cry. They are in their sweltering bed, the top sheet crumpled on the floor, Andrea in bra and panties, Long in his boxers. Tim is sobbing, the third time he has wakened in the past hour. They lie waiting to see if he will stop. "Children should be happy," she says, touching a strap of her nursing bra, rolling onto her side to face Long.

"I'd been dreaming," he tells her. "When I drank, I would dream about you. Now I dream about liquor." Taking her hand, he pulls her to him, feeling her resistance: her breasts are aching, her child is crying, her husband dreams of drinking.

Andrea whispers, "I wish you could drink a little. Every now and then." Her breathing is soft, hot against his cheek. The baby's cries grow dim, the tiny fan whirs steadily. "Either that," she says, "or I wish I could love you only a little."

The next morning—a Saturday, temperature ascending and no work to busy his hands, the blood in his limbs thick with the sweet pain of longing—finds Long driving past convenience stores and slowing, as if he were a teen-ager trying to get a glimpse of the girl he could not hope to have. Belted into the seat beside him, the cast extending her leg into the empty space before the glove box, Leslie holds a doll to the open window, the wind lifting its synthetic hair.

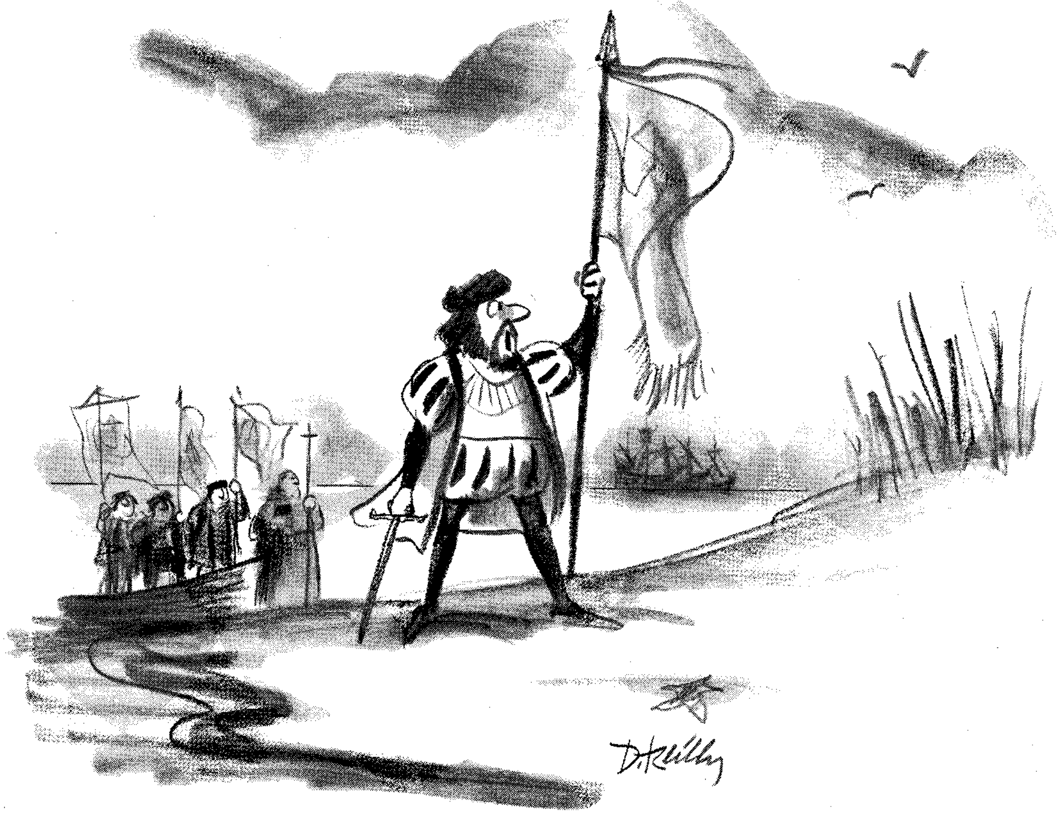
Long pulls into the asphalt lot of one of the stores, guiding the car between the parallel white lines. One beer, he thinks—a six-pack. "Look," Leslie says, and Long turns his head, only to find that she was speaking to the doll, whose straw gaze is turned toward the clouds.

He shifts the car into reverse.

Long digs a hole large enough to bury them all, then blends in peat moss, liquid fertilizer. He plants an oak, a sapling. The well around the tree—enormous, perfectly round, seven inches deep—he fills each night, with a slow run of water from a new green hose. He steps to the rim. The water reflects the scrawny tree, Long's face, Leslie's frilly dress and luminous cast as she carefully steps onto his feet, gripping the creases of his pants. Andrea stands beside him holding Tim against her hip. Long can see his son's face in the water, but Andrea's head is turned. Long wants to see the tree well as a halo. He knows that at night it will reflect the stars. He waits, but Andrea's face does not appear.

He does not drink.

—Robert Boswell



"By authority of the Queen, I name this spot One Columbus Plaza."

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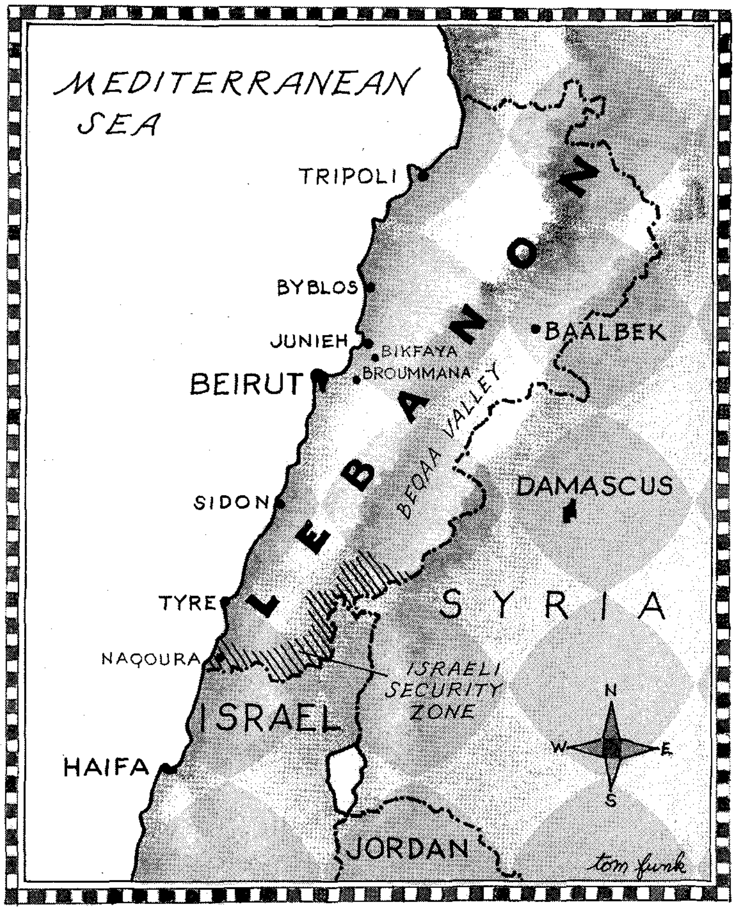
A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVE



AT first glance, Lebanon looked peaceful enough—hardly a country defined by death. It was dawn, and the Empress, a dilapidated ferry I had boarded the night before in Cyprus, was steaming slowly into the port of Junieh, a few miles to the north of Beirut. The ferry was the only available transportation into Lebanon; the airport, in West Beirut, was open, but the Iranian-backed Lebanese Shiite militia known as Hezbollah—the incarcerators of nine American hostages—were close by. It would have been an act of hubris to land there. The seven-hour boat trip, though uncomfortable, was at least safe, and as the Empress approached the dock I watched with pleasure as sailboats and a seaplane or two bobbed at anchor in the harbor. Hotels lined the shore, their patios ready to serve a clientele at tables shaded by cheerful colored umbrellas. Beyond them were modern apartment buildings, and handsome stone villas with arched windows and red tile roofs. But what held my eye was the high mountain wall, the country's dominating physical feature, which descended abruptly to within what seemed like a few steps of the water's edge. The Lebanon range runs almost the entire length of the country, but Christians invariably refer to the section within their enclave as "the mountain." Its wooded slopes were neatly terraced, and dotted with buildings of every sort. At its ridgeline I spied the domed silhouette of a large church, with a bell tower and cross reaching dramatically into the sky. The silhouette seemed to validate the mountain's historic role as the ancestral home of Lebanon's powerful Maronite Christian community, which I had come to examine. But before I disembarked from the Empress I was introduced to a more immediate taste of the venomous politics that in the past thirteen years has left a hundred and twenty-five thousand dead. The purser informed me apologetically that, unlike my fellow-passengers, I could not retrieve my passport, which I had surrendered on boarding, until I had been questioned by representatives of the Lebanese Forces, the principal Christian militia.

I had not expected to encounter the Lebanese Forces so soon. Last spring, when I began thinking about going back to Lebanon, which I had last visited in 1983, I called on the Lebanese Ambassador in Washington, Dr. Abdallah Bouhabib. We agreed that this was a good time to go, since the six-year term of President Amin Gemayel would expire in September, and Lebanon might be expected to embark on a new search for a settlement of its civil war. Bouhabib informed me that while West Beirut—and particularly the suburbs to the south, which were held largely by Hezbollah—was very dangerous for Western journalists, East Beirut, where the Christians ruled, was safe. He insisted nonetheless that I would be well advised to let his government handle my security, and it was arranged that I would be met at the pier by a Lebanese government delegate. The delegate was indeed waiting when the Empress docked, but I was unable to reach him until the Lebanese Forces had finished with me. The interrogation, conducted on deck by two young men in T-shirts, was not particularly intimidating. They asked what I planned to do as a journalist in Lebanon, and whether I intended to see spokesmen for the Lebanese Forces. When I said that I was willing to see anyone, they invited me to appear at their headquarters the next morning to arrange a schedule of interviews.

It was not until they returned my passport and sent me on my way that I was approached by the government's representative, a slim, blue-eyed, elegantly dressed man in his forties, who introduced himself as Samir Fares, an aide to President Gemayel. Apologizing for the inconvenience I had just undergone, he led me to his car. "Naturally, the President doesn't consider the Lebanese Forces legal," he told me as he settled behind the wheel. "We stay on good terms with them, but we don't deal with them formally. You noticed that I hesitated to have any conversation with them. They control the ports in the Christian sector, but we try to keep their soldiers off the streets, to present a civilized face to the outside world." On our way out of the port, we were stopped at a checkpoint manned by uniformed youths of the Forces, who were carrying automatic weapons.

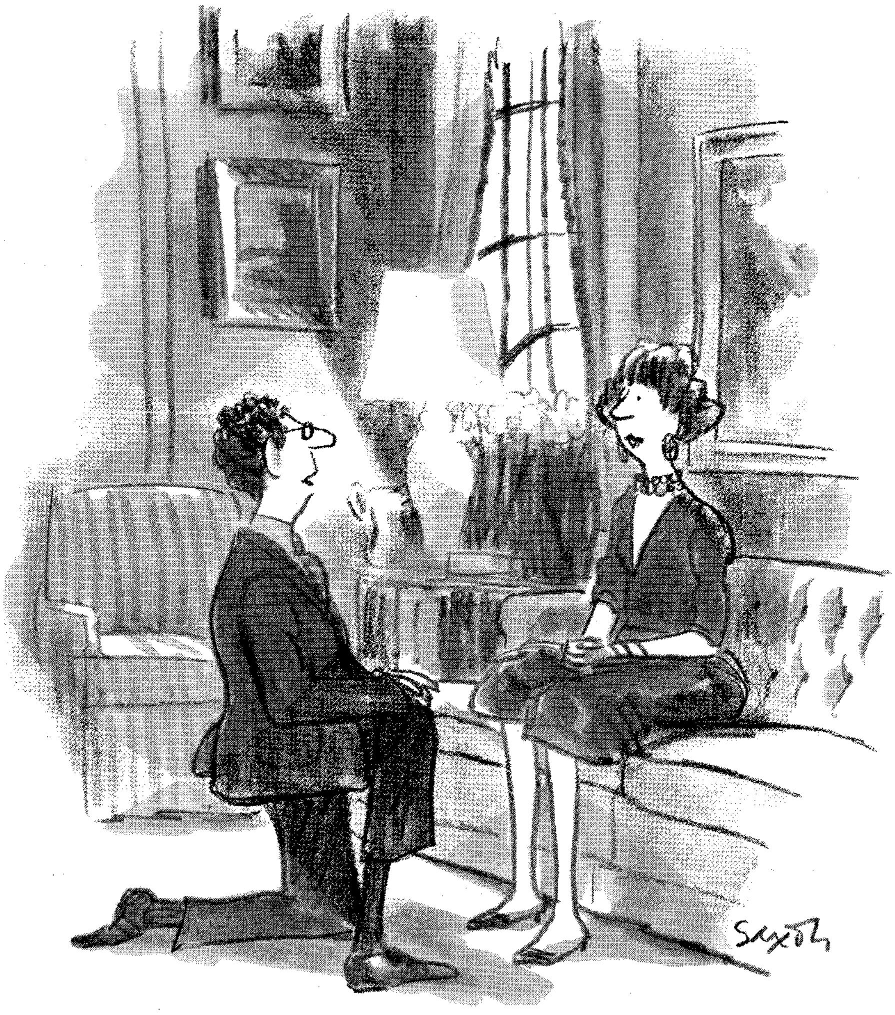
With the mountain on our left, we headed south into East Beirut, along a traffic-choked highway that ran parallel to the beach. The city, though shabby, had a life-goes-on look about it: men and women munching pastries and drinking coffee at an outdoor restaurant, a sporting-goods store promoting surfboards, movie houses with recent American films, farmers selling fresh produce from truck beds, billboards advertising soft drinks and brassieres, a flower shop with a sign in its window—"LIVEN UP YOUR BALCONIES WITH OUR ANNUALS." Some buildings displayed on their façades large posters of President Gemayel in a vanilla suit; others offered his late brother, Bashir, shirt unbuttoned at the throat, sleeves rolled up to his biceps. After fifteen minutes or so, Fares turned off the highway into the foothills, and we wound upward until we reached his home, a splendid villa in the upper-class suburb of Rabiya. There we sat on his balcony and ate a Lebanese breakfast of flat bread, olives, and cheese, listening to Beethoven and looking out over the Mediterranean.

During breakfast, Fares told me that he had arranged with an auto-rental agency to provide me with a car and an experienced driver, and had also consulted with the government's security experts, who had concluded that bodyguards were unnecessary. Kidnappings were unheard of in the Christian enclave, he said, and bodyguards were likely only to attract attention. I replied that, unfamiliar as I was with Lebanon's security conditions, I was quite willing to be guided by the government's experts, and this seemed to settle the matter. When we had finished breakfast, Fares introduced me to my driver, a pleasant-looking young man named Roni, and asked him to take me to Broummana, a town farther up the mountain, where I had reserved a room. After unpacking, I decided to phone the American Embassy to announce my arrival.

Checking in with the Embassy is by no means customary for correspondents visiting foreign capitals, but Beirut is different. Because of the ongoing hostage crisis, Lebanon is currently off limits to holders of American passports. The State Department had granted me a waiver, though without enthusiasm. The last thing the Embassy wanted was another American hostage, a sentiment I fully shared. So when the voice at the other end of the line told me that John Kelly, the Ambassador, would be pleased to see me that very afternoon it seemed only reasonable to comply.

The American Embassy is now in East Beirut—in the foothills, just above the sea. The old Embassy, on the corniche in West Beirut, was destroyed in 1983 by a car bomb—an attack in which sixty-seven people lost their lives. The security at the new Embassy was, to say the least, impressive: at the perimeter stood a tank surrounded by guards whose fingers were poised on the triggers of their weapons; concrete blocks and traffic bumps were distributed along the road leading to the compound; at the entrance, visitors had to pass through a metal detector and a series of heavy-wire-mesh doors; a retractable three-foot-high steel barrier inside the gate provided a second line of defense; and sharpshooters seated in two tall towers surveyed the entire scene. Given the recent history of the Embassy, these safeguards did not seem excessive. In 1976, Francis Meloy, the American Ambassador, was ambushed and killed, and a year after the Embassy in West Beirut was bombed another car bomb exploded at the presumably safer site in East Beirut, killing two Americans and seven Lebanese.

The security procedures have created an atmosphere of unremitting tension inside the Embassy compound, but Ambassador Kelly, who was seated in an easy chair sipping a soft drink when I entered his office, appeared reassuringly relaxed. Kelly, who has held a series of military and intelligence posts



"I know I don't express myself well, Evelyn, but please understand that I am sincerely yours."

DURING RAIN AND WIND

Outside the rain batters
the row of ornamental alders,
which hunch their shoulders
and give their backs to the storm.
She tells me she's afraid
of wind. When it comes on
in force it wakens her
at night and sends her groping
in the darkness for the safety
of a closet. I don't answer
because with her hands
in my mouth I can't speak.
She withdraws the chrome pick,
her eyes flutter and wander
to the brilliant ceiling, and she
recalls a storm warning long ago
in an unnamed rural town
of childhood. A twister, her mother
called it, kneeling head cocked
to the wood and plastic radio.
The two of them alone, far
from town or anyone, the windows
going black. She shakes her head
awake and goes back to work.
That was before the move
to the Coast, the slow stormless
drenchings of the Pacific Northwest
in which she came of age.
Without my glasses, I read
the large rough pores of her cheek
only inches away, the lines
spreading out from the corner
of her left eye, and see
she's no longer a girl, she's
almost old. Her pick finds
a tiny inlet on a gold-inlaid
rear molar, and I shudder
with a thrill of pain. "I'd
keep that clean," she says,
"though it's not much use now
with nothing above." Outside
a low line of dark clouds
comes on while another gathers
itself behind. In the trough
of the wind the small pruned trees
puff up and collect their breath.

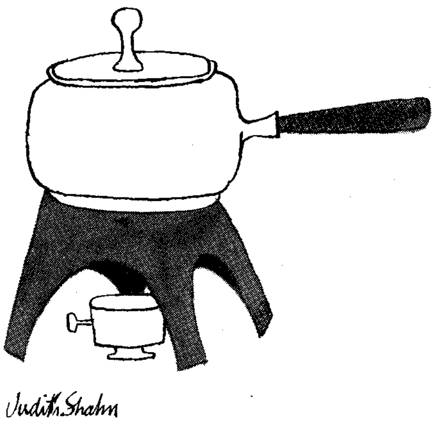
—Philip Levine

• •

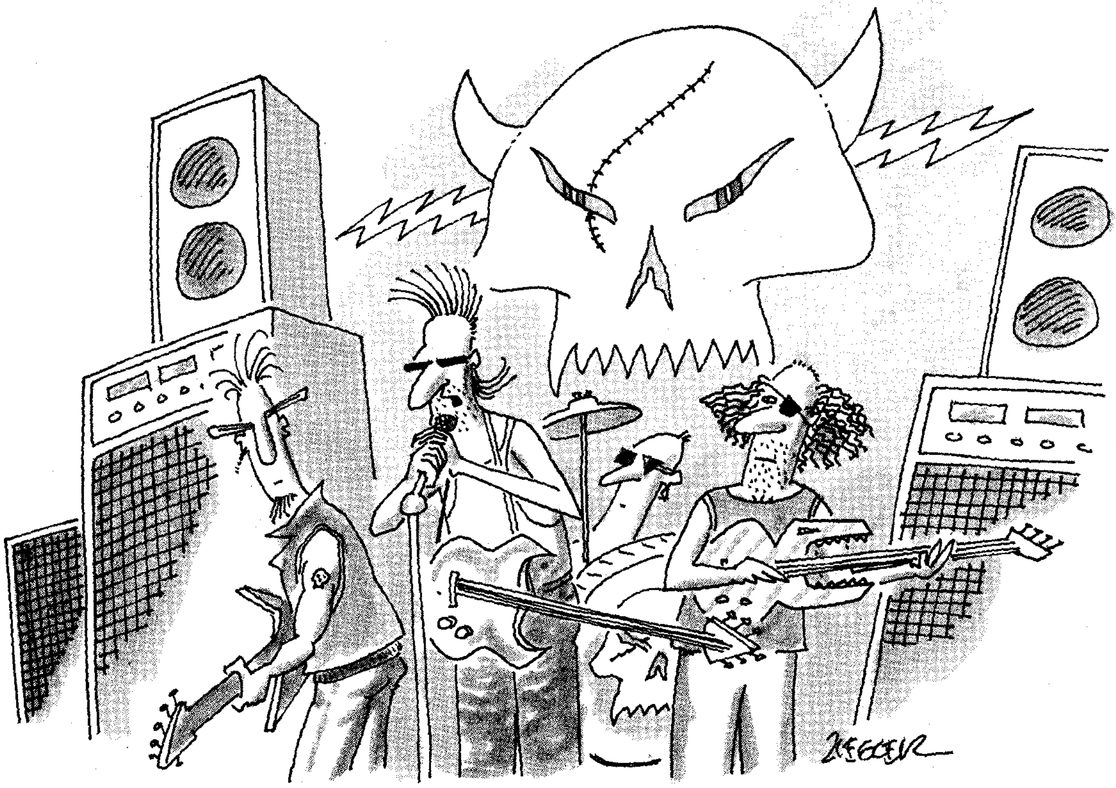
during twenty years in the Foreign Service, at a glance fits no diplomatic stereotype; he looks more like an Irish bartender. Forty-eight years old, he has a prominent belly and a shock of unkempt hair that falls over his forehead, and he seems a bit out of character in a business suit. When I told him that Fares had decided I did not need bodyguards, he scowled. Two weeks before, during the half-hour journey from his residence to the Embassy, he had been challenged by a car carrying gunmen of unidentified allegiance, and the memory of the incident was still fresh in his mind. Kelly travels through the city in a convoy led by a vehicle with a machine gun on the roof. He rides in an armored limousine, followed by two cars of bodyguards, who wave automatic weapons out the windows. The routine is indisputably provocative—particularly on streets crowded with militiamen, bodyguards, and various other young studs who carry lethal weapons as a matter of course. Kelly's people had somehow antagonized the men in the other car, who proceeded to play a dangerous game of high-speed tag with his convoy for ten minutes or so along the boulevards of East Beirut, while Kelly, on the orders of his security chief, lay on the limousine's floor. Accounts differ as to how many shots were fired, but the two sides apparently did not shoot directly at each other, and the episode was not regarded as either an assassination or kidnapping attempt. However, it had upset the Ambassador, and he did not want me to ride around Beirut unattended. He told me that the murder last October, on a shopping street in East Beirut, of three French Embassy guards might well have been averted if they had not been so arrogant as to go out alone. Kelly said he would phone that afternoon to ask Fares to assign a security detail to me, and I did not object.

The next morning, five bodyguards appeared in Broummana, at about the time Roni arrived in the rental car. When I saw them waiting in the hotel lobby, it seemed to me that Fares had overdone it, but their chief, a placid man in his thirties who introduced himself as Elie, assured me that the number was usual. Before we set out for the day's appointments, Elie explained that I would ride in the back seat of the car and he would ride shotgun next to Roni, while the others followed immediately behind us in a second car. I felt overwhelmed by the arrangement, especially after I saw the mean-looking automatic weapon that he cuddled between his knees, but in very little time I got used to the company.

Though I never felt in jeopardy in the Christian enclave, Elie was nevertheless important to me. He knew every mountain road and every street in the city, which was heartening in a place where the scenery is heavily marked by the scars of war, where prudent storekeepers keep their wares hidden behind walls of sandbags, where security men examine the trunks of cars for bombs at all public and many private buildings. Still, bodyguards cannot do everything, and one morning we drove by the hulks of half a dozen vehicles scattered across the road by a car bomb that had exploded only fifteen minutes earlier. (Twenty injured, none dead, the newspaper said the next morning.) Traffic lights long ago ceased to function in Beirut, and one-way signs are uniformly ignored, but rules of the road seem to have been fashioned for intersections, and even in rush hour delays are minor. It occurred to me that a driver's willingness to yield was probably enhanced by the fear that the other driver might be carrying a loaded firearm. If we were in a hurry to keep an appointment, Elie reinforced this premise by rolling down his window and snarling at the other cars. I saw him challenged only once—by a pretty young woman who smiled slyly as she maneuvered her car in front of us, at which Elie burst out laughing. The only other time I saw him defeated was at the Lebanese Forces' headquarters, where he was told by a guard that he would have to leave behind the .45 he carried in his belt—though he could keep his walkie-talkie—if he wanted to accompany me inside. Muttering, he handed the gun to one of his deputies,



having reasoned, I suppose, that he would rather defend me with his bare hands than leave me unattended.



"Would the owner of the 1985 Ford station wagon, license plate METAL-1, please move your car so that the ice-cream truck can get through?"

• •

Father Étienne Sacre, a sixty-three-year-old Maronite priest, had been recommended to me as a guide on the subject of Christian Lebanon. Educated at a Jesuit college in Strasbourg, holder of a doctorate from the Sorbonne in Paris, he is a member of the order of Maronite monks, which he told me was the largest monastic order in the Middle East. Father Étienne prefers to speak French rather than Arabic, and he uses the French spelling of his name instead of Saqr, the conventional Arabic spelling. We met in the seaside town of Kaslik, in his office at the University of the Holy Spirit, where he served as rector for six years before his recent retirement. The university was founded in 1962, chiefly to train novices for the priesthood, he told me, but it offers a full curriculum, in fulfillment of its role as "a guardian against anti-Lebanese ideologies and a preserver of Maronite culture."

The Maronites are the principal Christian sect in Lebanon, and a crucial element in the civil war. They are estimated to number about eight hundred thousand, compared with the country's two hundred and fifty thousand Greek Orthodox, two hundred thousand Greek Catholics, and hundred and twenty-five thousand Armenian Catholics. Together, the Christians make up nearly half of Lebanon's total population of three million. But numbers alone do not support Christian claims upon the Lebanese political system, or Maronite claims to preëminence among the Christians. The Maronites have been an identifiable community in Lebanon since breaking away from Byzantium in the seventh century. They adopted the Arabic language shortly afterward, when the Arabs conquered the Middle East, but they have fiercely resisted, from their invulnerable bastion on the mountain, both the Islamic religion and absorption by the political and cultural entity sometimes known as "the Arab nation." Over the centuries, the vanguard of that resistance has consistently been the Maronite priesthood, dozens of whose monasteries still hug the Lebanese slopes. Maronites note with pride that, in contrast to the other Christian sects, they have been a part of Lebanon throughout their history. They are, Father Étienne said, the incarnation of *Libanisme.*

In the eleventh century, the Maronites sided with the Crusaders in their assault upon Islam, and, according to reliable accounts, provided vital assistance in the capture of Jerusalem. For this, Father Étienne noted, "the Arabs have never forgiven us." Through the Crusaders, the Maronites established ties with the Papacy, and by the thirteenth century they had submitted themselves—while retaining a few of their doctrinal peculiarities—to the authority of the Church of Rome. Early in the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Turks incorporated Lebanon into their empire, but they left the Maronites largely to themselves, and in 1535 the Caliph signed the first of a series of "capitulations" granting France the right to protect Maronites within his realm. One historian sees significance in the fact that, beginning with Louis XIV, the French, as part of their *mission civilisatrice,* invited generations of Maronites to study in France, offering them free passage and tuition. As a result of such policies, while their Muslim neighbors were growing increasingly insular under Ottoman rule the Maronites grew increasingly worldly.

In the seventeenth century, the Maronites began moving down into the coastal areas that were home to Sunni and Shiite Muslims, and south into the Shouf, the section of the Lebanon range occupied by the Druse, a highly individualistic community of Islamic schismatics. In 1820, the Maronite-Druse collision sparked a series of ferocious wars, now deeply embedded in Lebanon's collective memory, which reached a peak in the massacre by the Druse of twelve thousand Christians in 1860. France, in fulfillment of its obligation, then landed troops and imposed on the Ottomans a system of political autonomy for Lebanon based on a separate communal life for Christians, Muslims, and Druse, and on the sharing of power under a formula that left the Maronites dominant. When a French mandate replaced Ottoman rule after the First World War, the principles of this system were retained, and in 1920 the French created Greater Lebanon, by adding to the mountain the heavily Muslim port cities of Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli and the almost totally Muslim Beqaa Valley. By that time, France and its culture, and particularly the French language, had become central to Maronite identity.

Arab nationalism had meanwhile emerged as a major political phenomenon in the Middle East, and the Lebanese Muslims—especially the Sunnis—were by no means immune to it. They turned eastward, urging Lebanon's union with Syria, while the Christians continued to face resolutely west. In 1926, the French declared Lebanon a republic, and established a "confessional" system of government, which was based on representation according to religious community, with the Maronites holding all the key positions. This system was obviously inequitable, and when France granted Lebanon independence, in 1943, Christians and Muslims negotiated an unwritten agreement known to all Lebanese as the National Pact. In it the Christians renounced dependence upon the West in return for Muslim renunciation of union with Syria or any other Arab state. The National Pact preserved confessionalism as the basic principle of government and reaffirmed the Maronite claim to the Presidency, the command of the Army, and other top positions. The Sunnis were given the post of Prime Minister, and the Shiites that of speaker of the parliament; parliamentary seats were allotted in a ratio of six to five in favor of the Christians, and so were the bulk of the civil-service and military posts.

No Lebanese has ever claimed that the National Pact established a democracy in the majoritarian sense. To avoid any redistribution of power, Lebanon has not had a census since 1932, but even at the time of the National Pact it was acknowledged that the Christians were probably a minority. The pact was designed to assure Lebanon's Christians that they could preserve their culture within an Islamic sea. The Muslims' recompense came in 1945, when Lebanon became a charter member of the Arab League—the only member led by a Christian. Ever since, Lebanon has attempted to straddle the two worlds.

"We don't want to be the enemy of the Arabs," Father Étienne said to me. "We want to be open to dialogue with the Arab world without the Arabs' requiring us to shut out Western influences. We are afraid that Lebanese Muslims who talk about Arabizing the country really want to Islamize it. If Lebanon had a Muslim President, he would have to govern according to the Koran, and we could not accept that. We cannot live like the Copts in Egypt—without rights. We know the Arabs. We are convinced that they want to make us *dhimmis*"—second-class citizens—"within the Islamic community. We are not opposed to changes in the National Pact. We are even willing to live in a secular state. However, if Lebanon has unrestricted majority rule we might start out in a secular state but we would soon be living in an Islamic state. That is the nature of Islam. We favor pluralism, and freedom of religion, but we believe that the Christians are the heart of Lebanon: we have been here for thirteen hundred years. We can live with the Muslims, but we cannot agree to changes that mean giving up our way of life and our traditions."

LEBANON is a country of roughly four thousand square miles (somewhat smaller than the state of Connecticut), of which the Christian enclave—the mountain and the shoreline from East Beirut north to Byblos—occupies about a fifth. Of the rest, the Syrians control about two-thirds (Hezbollah and the Druse exercising considerable autonomy within these areas), and the Israelis, in their "security zone" in the south, about a tenth. What remains is in the hands of the Palestinians and the Shiites' other militia, known as Amal. Many Christians live in villages of their own scattered throughout the country—most notably in a section of the north controlled by Syria—but in the fighting since 1975 hundreds of thousands of them have fled

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"Of course I want to grow as a person, but first I want to grow as a banker."

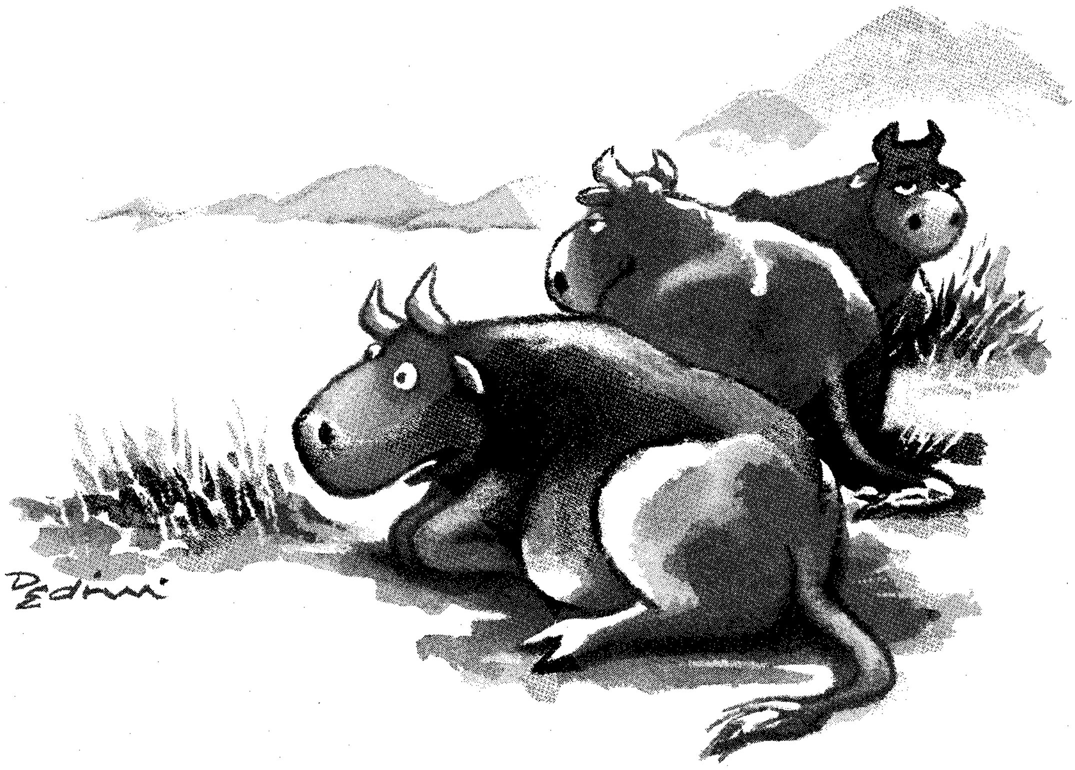
to the enclave. Similarly, there are Muslims living under Christian control; East Beirut, for instance, retains a substantial body of Sunnis, and Byblos for centuries has had a community of Shiites. Still, the Christian enclave, and particularly the mountain, is socially and politically different from the rest of Lebanon. The visual evidence alone indicates that it is part of the West, not of the Arab world.

I caught my first glimpse of Lebanon's Christian world on the mountain five years ago, travelling by car from Damascus to Beirut. The driver, to avoid unfriendly checkpoints on the Damascus-Beirut highway, turned north in the Beqaa Valley and then west into the hills, winding upward from one Christian village to the next before descending to the narrow coastal plain just north of the capital. I was astonished then at the handsome Italian look of the villages, in contrast to the rather nondescript Arab villages I had seen during visits to other parts of the country. The look was no coincidence, I later learned. Lebanese builders have been inspired by European models since the days of the Crusaders, and art historians identify a particular affinity between traditional Lebanese mountain design and Venetian architecture of the Middle Ages. The Crusaders brought the concept of the pointed arch back home with them from the Arab world, and it was integrated into European Gothic. The idea returned to Lebanon via Venice, and the motif of the triple pointed arch became an integral part of Lebanese design.

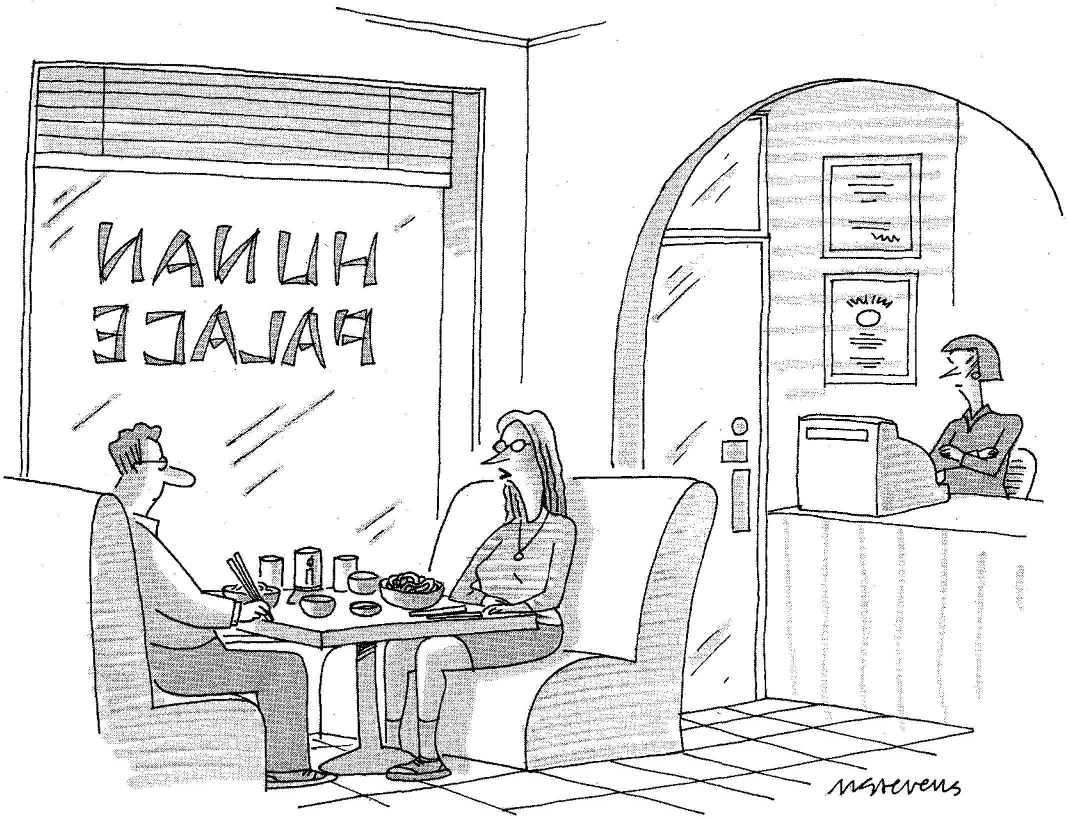
Unlike the Europeans, however, the Maronites put most of their efforts at design not into their churches but into their homes. Village churches tend to be hidden among the houses and, except for bell towers, are architecturally indistinguishable from them. To compare the village church with the traditional mountain house, however, is not to demean its beauty. The traditional house is lovingly fashioned of a clear white sandstone, with a balcony placed to look out upon an exquisite panorama of valleys and peaks, and often of the Mediterranean. Social historians say that this architecture bespeaks the absence of influence from the Arabs of the plains, who produced houses of mud, as well as from the Turks, who usually built their houses of wood. The traditional Maronite house—almost invariably small, detached, and with little external ornamentation—reflects a certain egalitarianism, and also a commitment to the nuclear family, neither a characteristic of Arab culture. The ensemble conveys to the villages of the mountain a solid, prosperous, bourgeois quality.

In recent times, the Maronites, like much of the Western world, have entered a new commercial era. Day and night on the mountain, automobiles speed nearly bumper to bumper along narrow, winding roads. Shopping centers with chic boutiques, movie houses, and fast-food and video shops have largely replaced family stores. Broummana, where I returned each night to sleep, is a particularly lively village, frequented by Lebanese tourists, with brightly lit restaurants and open-air cafés; rock music broadcast from loudspeakers competed with the roar of hot-rodders in keeping me awake. Compared with the rest of Lebanon, the mountain is free of the damage of war, though the war may explain some of the neglect in the maintenance of the streets. The war's principal impact has been to drive people from the tensions of Beirut to the mountain's tranquillity. Residential building has boomed, and the entire region—perhaps for the first time in its history—seems crowded. Unfortunately, deficiencies of government have left the door open to the depredations of laissez-faire capitalism. Signs and billboards of every size intrude upon quiet rural roads and block the view. Concrete and steel have replaced hewn stone in construction, and the new village landmarks are filling stations.

The village of Beit Shebab, where I spent several afternoons, has preserved much of its original flavor. Fastened to an especially steep flank of the mountain, it is slightly off the beaten



"Are we bucolic or just afraid to take risks?"



"I'm going to ask for a fork. Don't try to stop me."

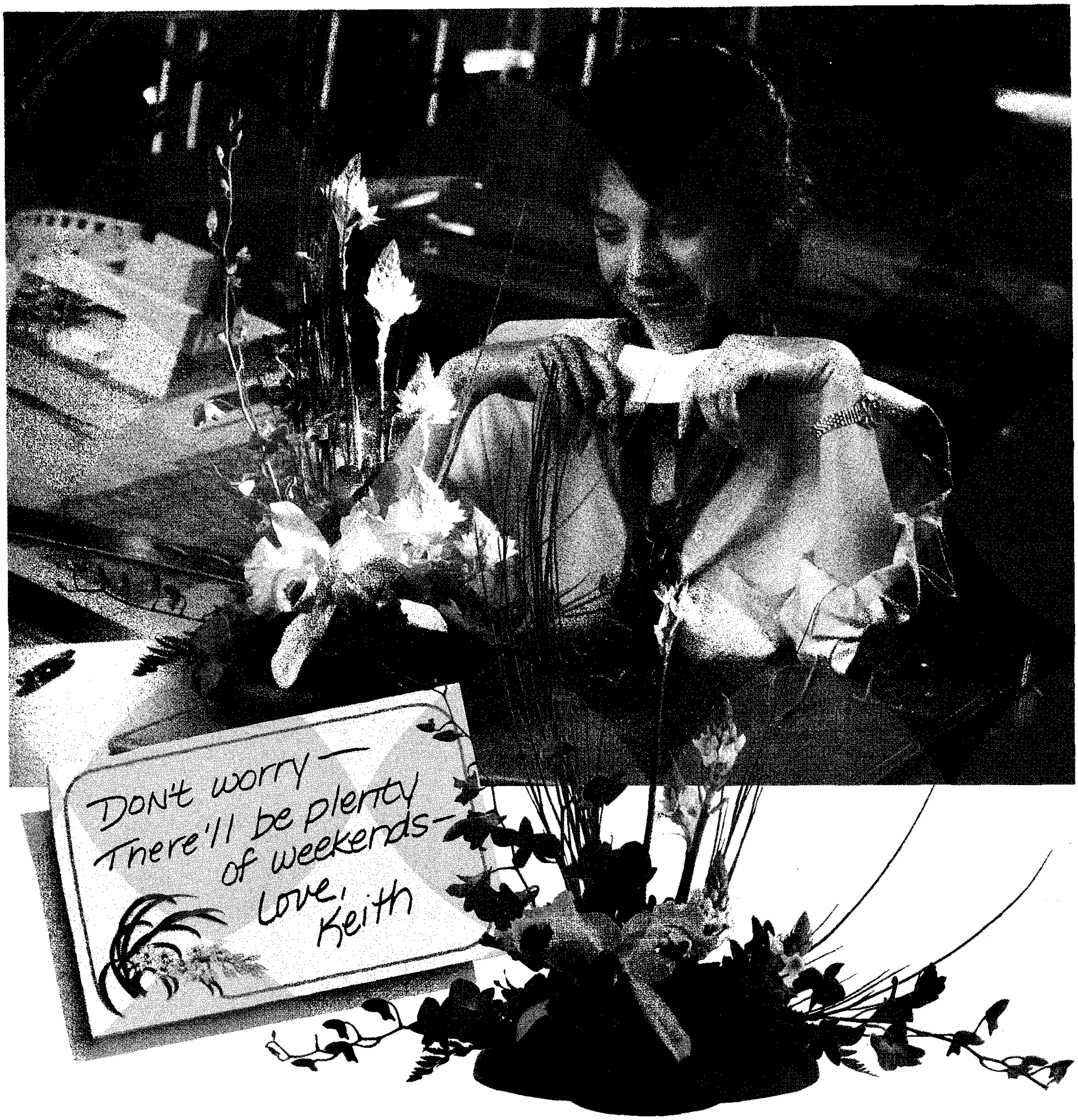
• •

track. Beit Shebab was built on a site once inhabited by Romans, and probably Phoenicians before them, and it has seen Crusaders pass, then Mamluks, Ottomans, Egyptians, and French. Nearly all its ten thousand residents trace their roots to seventeen families who lived there five hundred years ago. The village has twice been destroyed and abandoned, but both times the original families returned to rebuild it. Each family has its own church, a small architectural treasure of clear stone embedded in the wooded landscape. A French poet is said to have compared Beit Shebab to a cluster of open pomegranates, its rows of houses, with their reddish tile roofs, recalling the seeds. Like other Lebanese, many of Beit Shebab's residents emigrated in the twentieth century, to Africa, Europe, or the Americas. Most send money to the families they left behind, and many, over time, return—to vacation, to marry, to die. Their remittances have made Beit Shebab, in spite of the economic strains of the war, richer than it has been in centuries.

My host in the village was Émile Bejjani, a successful lawyer, who each morning travels fifteen miles down the mountain to his office, in East Beirut. The interior of his stone house reminded me of bourgeois dwellings I have visited in the French countryside. It is a few steps from the marketplace, which is an enclosure of a hundred square yards or so, with a tile roof supported by pointed arches that date from the last century. Now and then, herds of goats pass through the narrow streets. Though English is growing in importance in the region, the village has not shifted the orientation it has had for centuries. The traffic signs are in French and Arabic. Unlike the Arabs, mountain people eat and drink with the zest of the French. Maronites feel at home in France, Bejjani said, and many of his acquaintances have fled the war to live there. "We Maronites are Mediterranean, not Arab," one of Bejjani's friends said to me, over coffee. "Our civilization is Greco-Roman." In Bejjani's view, the Muslims are envious of Lebanon's Christian culture—both of its prosperity and of its liberty. "We're sorry the French left us," he told me. "We miss them. For us, France represents an ideal."

On a Sunday morning, I attended Mass a few miles from Beit Shebab, in the Presidential palace in Bikfaya, the seat of the Gemayel clan. A handsome mountain village of about twenty thousand people, Bikfaya has at its southern end a larger-than-life statue of Pierre Gemayel—known to most Lebanese as Sheikh Pierre—which was placed there by President Amin Gemayel, his elder son. Pierre Gemayel was a pharmacist who, after attending the 1936 Olympic Games in Nazi Berlin, returned home to found an ultra-nationalist political party, which he named the Phalange. Sheikh Pierre also helped design the National Pact in 1943, and although he never attained his ambition of becoming President, both his sons were elected to the office. Amin, since his election in 1982, has lived, for the sake of his family's security, in his official summer residence in Bikfaya, rather than in the formal residence in the East Beirut suburb of Baabda. In Ottoman times, the Bikfaya palace was the *sérail* of a regional governor. It is now the Presidential office, and a family house has been added a few steps away. Between the palace and the house is an old stable, used as a dormitory by the Presidential bodyguards.

The Mass was held on the ground floor of the palace, in an arched corridor transformed by the addition of an altar and some fifty chairs into a temporary chapel. The dark-haired, forty-six-year-old President, wearing a conservatively cut blue suit, sat in the front row with his wife, who was dressed in bright yellow. The service was conducted in Arabic by an elderly priest in white vestments, at whose side stood a choir of six young women in knee-length dresses and high heels. The congregation seemed to consist chiefly of local people—neighbors of the Gemayels, except for a handful of monks and nuns—and though not all the chairs were occupied when the Mass began, there was a crowd of more than a hundred people in the corridor by the time it ended. At the close of the service, the President and Mrs. Gemayel went into an adjacent room to receive their guests. The atmosphere



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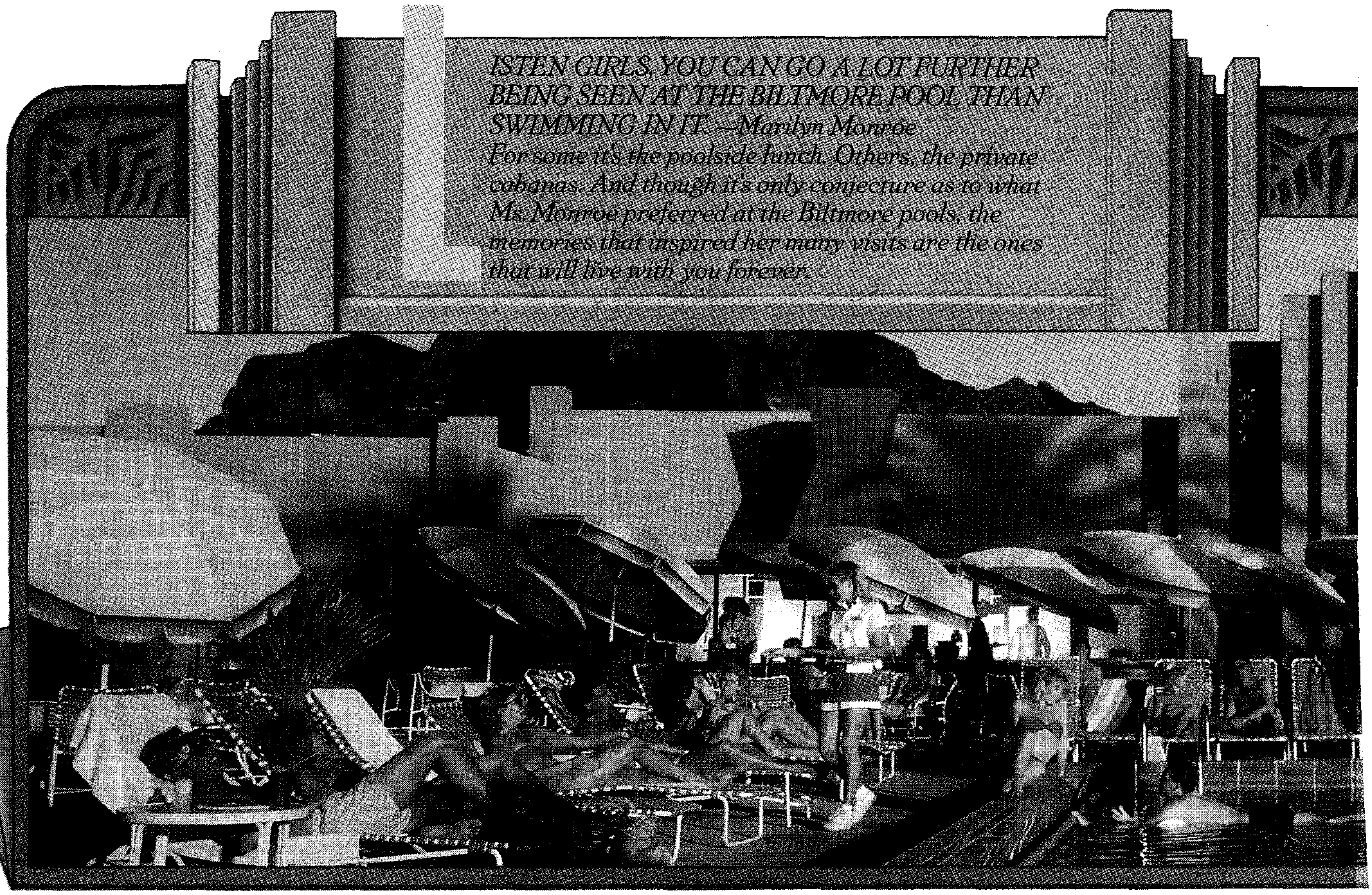
was relaxed and informal; I saw no one whom I could identify as a bodyguard. Servants moved through the crowd offering coffee and cookies on trays. The President seemed to recognize nearly all those who approached him, and he addressed many of them in French. He grasped hands warmly, kissed some of the women on both cheeks, sipped coffee as he spoke. My impression, as I stood nearby watching him, was of a melancholy man with sad eyes, who was in total control of himself. When the receiving line broke up, Amin sat down to talk with petitioners singly or in groups of two or three. He did this almost every Sunday, I was told. When Sheikh Pierre died, Amin became the head of the Gemayel clan—a position that may be more important to the people of Bikfaya than his Presidency of their country.

THE National Pact of 1943—the formula of political accommodation between Lebanon's Christians and Muslims—worked for more than thirty years. Elsewhere in the Arab world, those were trying times. The Arab countries were emerging from centuries of colonialism under the Turks and the Europeans, and were thrashing about in search of suitable institutions of government. Egypt overthrew its king in 1952, Iraq in 1958, Libya in 1969. Syria went from one bloody coup to the next throughout the fifties and sixties. Lebanon, in contrast, was a model of stability, with a capitalist economy that provided a substantial measure of prosperity for its middle and upper classes. Lebanese democracy, whatever its peculiarities, was the freest in the Arab world, and Beirut the freest city—a great metropolis, where international businessmen, journalists, and scholars rubbed shoulders with fun-seeking Arabs escaping from the rigid conformism of their own societies. Only one major crisis marred the period. In 1958, responding to the strident nationalism of Egypt's President Nasser, Lebanon's Muslim masses, under the leadership of Sunni radicals, tried to force the government to join with Cairo and Damascus in the newly founded United Arab Republic. The intervention of United States Marines, dispatched by President Eisenhower, brought the ensuing civil struggle to an end, but only after more than a thousand Lebanese died. Brief though it was, this episode left Lebanese Christians wondering how deeply the Muslims were committed to the National Pact, and how they would react to the next Arab demagogue who came along.

In retrospect, it is possible to chart the lapses in judgment—if that is the correct term—which led to the unravelling of Lebanese society. All Lebanese understood that their nation lay in the eye of the Middle East storm. Without much enthusiasm, Lebanon had joined the Arab countries in 1948 to wage war against Israel, and when a hundred and forty thousand Palestinians arrived as refugees at its borders the Lebanese let them in. Given the potentially volatile situation both within and without, the appropriate response would have been to strengthen the state, and particularly the Army. Instead, the government deliberately opted for weakness.

Perhaps Lebanon's freewheeling entrepreneurs did not want a state powerful enough to regulate their behavior, or an Army whose support would re-



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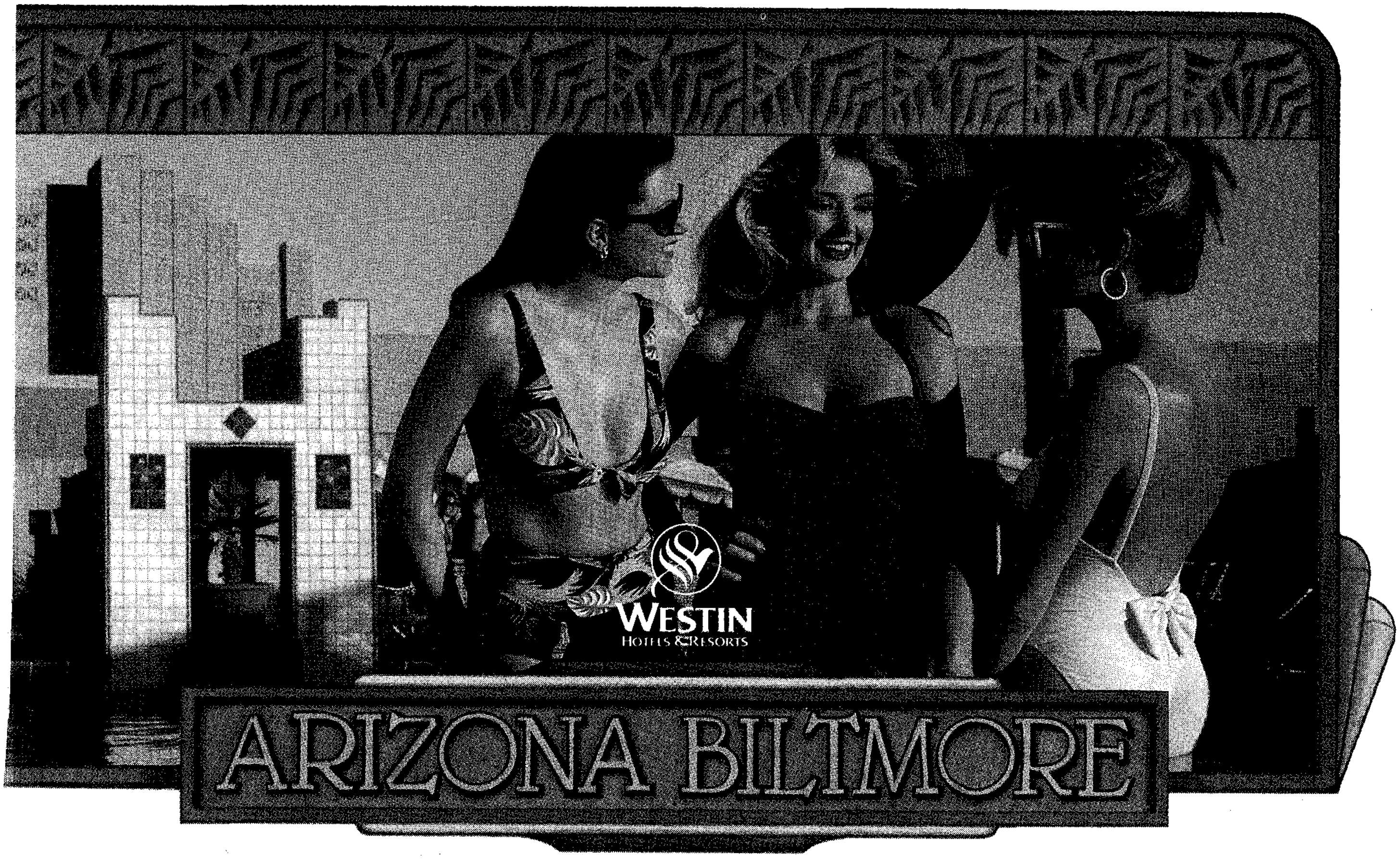
quire heavy taxation. Another theory holds that the Lebanese were too divided to endorse a strong state apparatus and too frightened of each other to create an Army that might wind up taking sides—or taking matters into its own hands with a coup d'état. Still another holds that the loyalty of the Lebanese was to their religious communities—and, within these communities, to their clans—and that few felt any sense of allegiance to the republic itself. In each of these suppositions there is truth, and the resulting strategy—a political lowest common denominator—was summed up in a slogan apparently coined by Sheikh Pierre. "Our strength lies in our weakness," he said, meaning that the Lebanese would be spared from fighting by being too weak to threaten either their neighbors or one another. The naïveté of this principle was demonstrated most dramatically in December of 1968, when the Israeli Army raided the Beirut airport—the symbol of Lebanon's sovereignty and prosperity—in retaliation for acts of terrorism committed by Lebanese-based Palestinians. While the Israelis destroyed thirteen airplanes, most of them belonging to Middle East Airlines, Lebanon's flag-carrier, the Lebanese government remained paralyzed, unwilling to order the Army into action. The Army's failure to fire a shot left the Lebanese so humiliated that an irresistible demand arose among them to allow the Palestinians a free hand to wage war against Israel from Lebanon's soil.

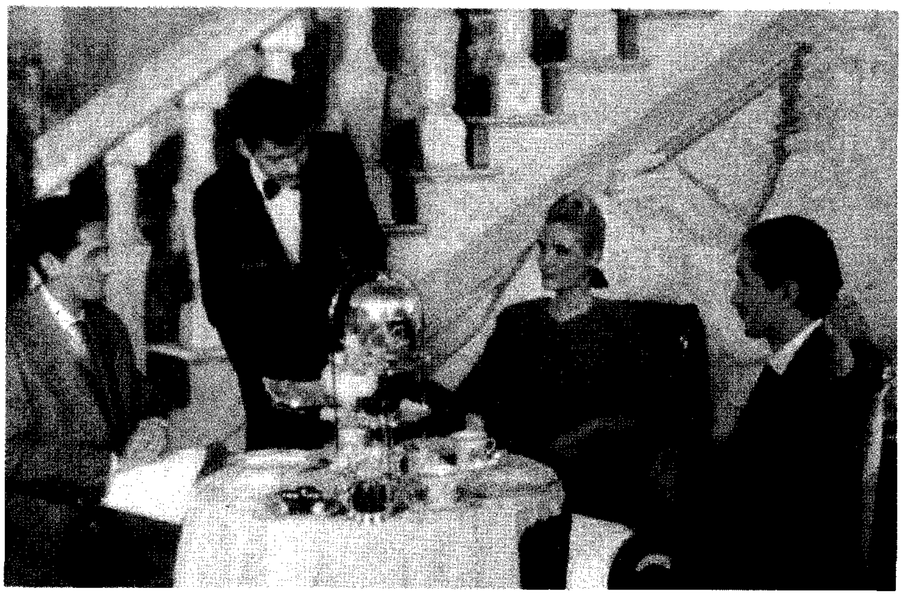
During their first twenty years of residence, the Palestinian refugees had not been a major problem for Lebanon, but after the devastating defeat of the Arab armies in the Six-Day War of 1967 the Palestinians' political arm, the Palestine Liberation Organization, adopted a policy of "armed struggle," a euphemism for terrorist warfare. In 1969, under pressure from the Arab League—and particularly from Nasser—Lebanon accepted the Cairo Agreement, which legitimatized the P.L.O. as a state-within-a-state and gave it not only sovereign powers over the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon but military facilities within striking distance of the Israeli frontier. Christian Lebanese contend, with benefit of hindsight, that the Cairo Agreement was a plot to Islamize the country by turning it over to the Palestinians and their Lebanese Muslim allies, but in fact the Agreement was endorsed by the parliament with only a single dissenting vote.

In contrast to Lebanon, Jordan took on the P.L.O., and in September of 1970 it thrashed the P.L.O.'s armed forces in bloody fighting when they tried to overthrow King Hussein. Palestinian military units then showed up in Lebanon, prepared to take up where they had left off in Jordan. Over the next several years, the P.L.O. acquired more and more arms and extended its control over much of southern Lebanon and the Beirut suburbs, increasingly exposing innocent Lebanese to Israel's harsh retaliation. The process intensified Lebanese polarization, with Muslims blaming Israel and gravitating toward the Palestinians, while Christians looked sympathetically to Israel and distanced themselves from the Palestinian cause. The country's diverse communities took to recruiting armed militias, accelerating the pace of national disintegration. Fighting finally broke out on a Sunday morning



in April of 1975, when unidentified gunmen fired at Sheikh Pierre after Mass outside a church in the Beirut suburb of Ain Rummaneh, killing his bodyguard and two others. That afternoon, Phalangist militiamen ambushed a bus passing through the village and massacred its twenty-eight passengers, most of them Palestinians. As if by prearranged signal, the combat spread, with Christians confronting the combined forces of the Palestinians, their Muslim allies, and the heavily armed Druse, who were ever ready to even scores with their traditional enemy. Rival militias quickly turned downtown Beirut into a battlefield, indiscriminately killing and maiming one another and thousands of bystanders. Within a few weeks, a de-facto border—the so-called green line—had been established: it ran southward from the sea, dividing Muslim West Beirut from Christian East Beirut. In the face of this deteriorating situation, the tired and cynical men who had shared the helm of state for three decades—Lebanon's President at the time was the truculent Suleiman Franjieh, the chief of a Maronite clan in the north—failed to agree on action, even when the Army began fragmenting into segments favorable to one faction or another. Well-meaning outsiders—the French, the Vatican, the Arab League—mediated in vain, and Egyptians, Libyans, and Syrians meddled less disinterestedly. The killing intensified in spurts over more than a year, reaching a peak in the summer of 1976, when the Christian militias besieged the Palestinian camp of Tel Zaatar, the home of thirty thousand refugees, while P.L.O.-Sunni forces advanced into the Maronite homeland on the mountain.

Lebanese, and particularly Maronites, are fond of revising history to fit a claim that the war was not between Lebanese at all but between foreign forces who used Lebanon as a battleground. The assertion contains some truth, though it can hardly be said that the Lebanese were without serious grievances against one another. The ruling élite, Muslim and Christian alike, had exploited the country mercilessly, and the state was glaringly deficient in providing education, health care, and other social services. The working class, mostly Muslim, was impoverished. Refugees from the south, fleeing Palestinian abuse and Israeli bombing, had circled Beirut



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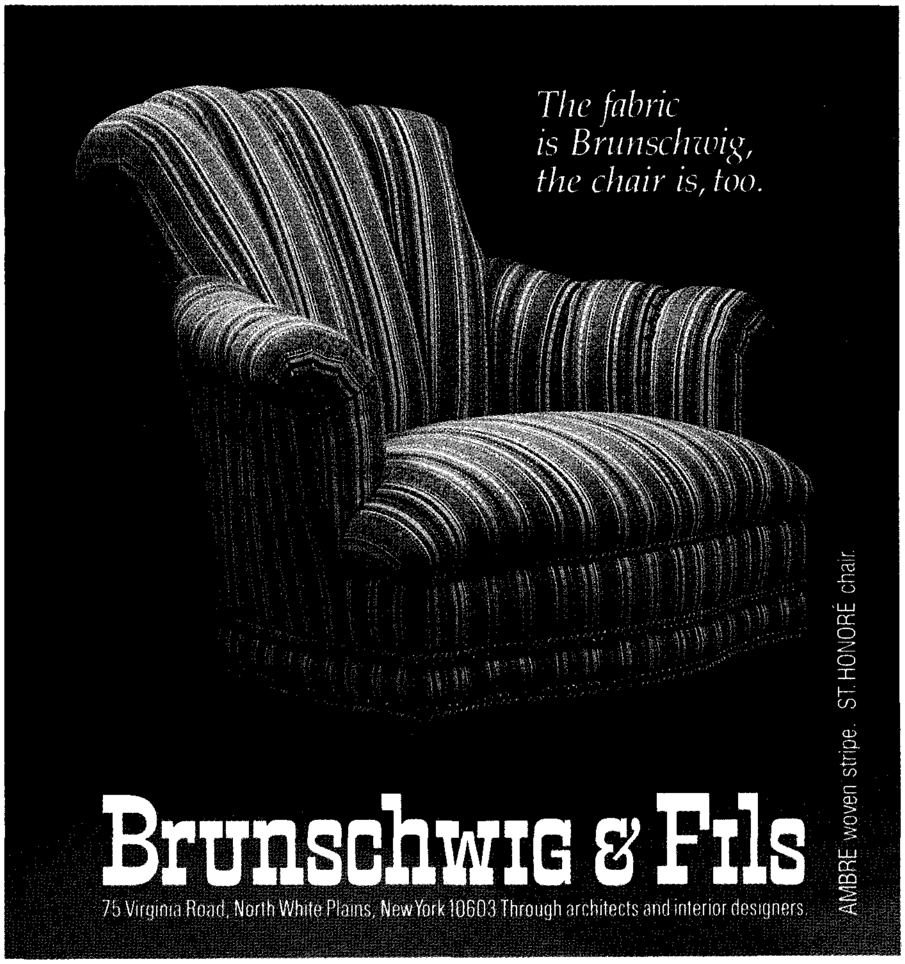
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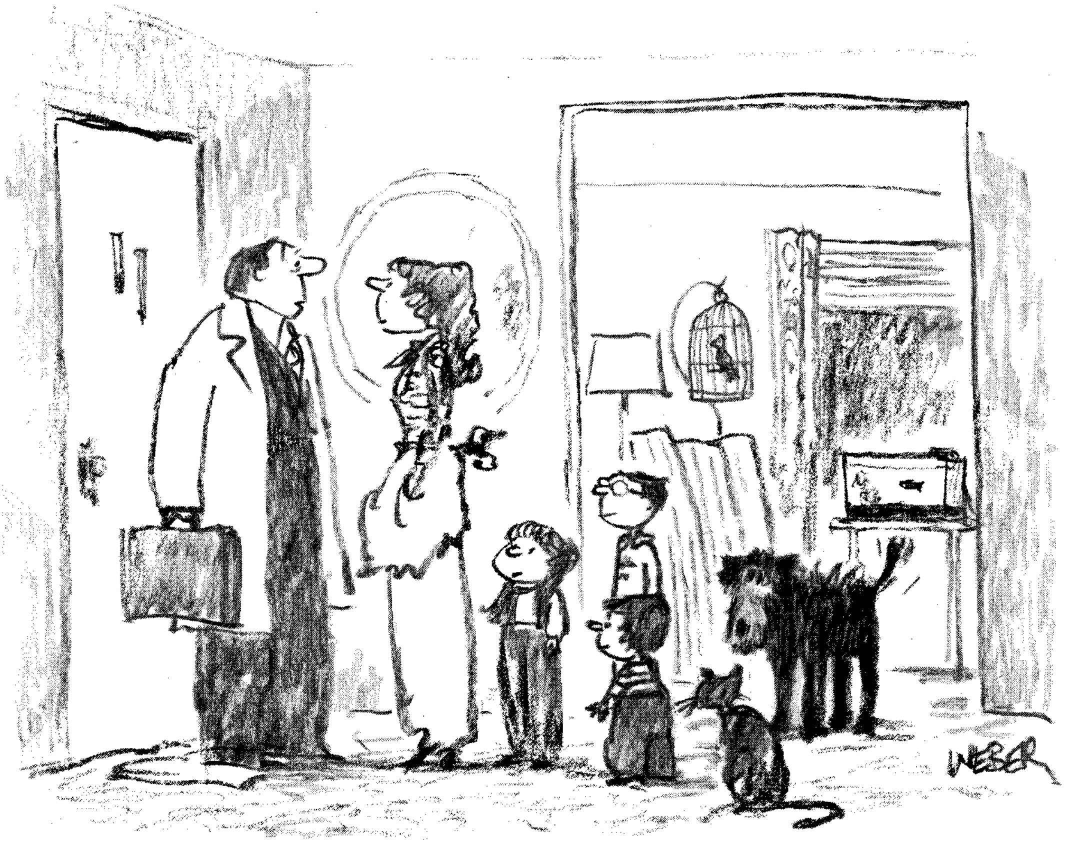
with a girdle of shantytowns known as the Misery Belt, which the government ignored. Though it seems fair to blame the Palestinians for disrupting Lebanon's fragile domestic equilibrium, it was the Lebanese who carried the guns and did most of the fighting, which they indulged in with an almost joyful savagery. It was also the Lebanese who, finally acknowledging the madness of their war and their own inability to end it, turned outward for help, thereby entering the trap from which they have not, to this day, extricated themselves. What they found was the Syrians, who had already begun to stake out a role.

Syria, worried about its own instability and determined that neither the Palestinians nor the Christians should triumph, had sent contingents into Lebanon in January, 1976. By summer, it had dispatched major fighting units, and in the fall Syrian domination of the field was retroactively endorsed—with Lebanese acquiescence—by a decision of the Arab League. No one was under any illusion that Syria's goal was simply to restore peace, however. Syria coveted Lebanon, believing that it had been scissored away by the French from its rightful place under Syrian sovereignty. Damascus had never recognized Lebanon's sovereignty, and still keeps no embassy in Beirut. Though the Syrians have made no move to annex Lebanon, the Maronites are convinced of their determination to Islamize it. Yet, ironically, Syria's first major military operation was to come to the Maronites' rescue, by clearing the mountain of the Palestinians and their allies. Until the Israeli invasion of 1982, Syria presided over an uneasy truce. The Israelis have largely gone home, but Syria, with thirty thousand troops in the country, remains—the antagonist of both the Christians and the Palestinians. It has permitted Lebanon the trappings of sovereignty but few of the powers, without ever having made clear its long-term objectives there.

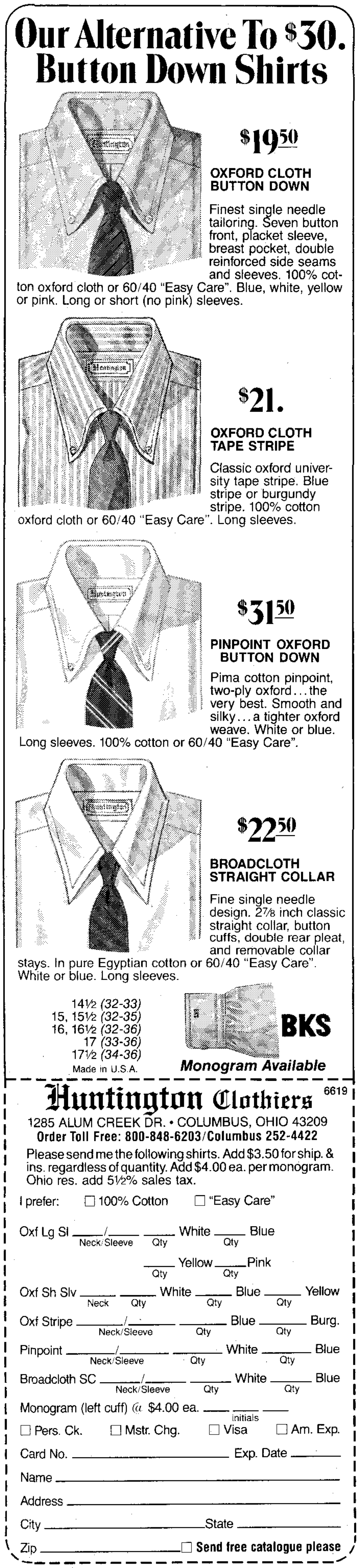


"I've had a rough day, honey. Tell me everybody's name again."

• •

IT was inevitable that the Maronites would eventually come to an accommodation with the Israelis. Both regard themselves as a beleaguered minority in an Islamic world. Both take pride in a culture that is largely alien to the region. Both cultivate a nationalism based on a sense of history and religious community, and both have co-religionists around the globe who are concerned with their fate. On a strategic level, furthermore, they share an animosity toward the Palestinians. It is true that many Maronites are critical of the Israelis for seeking to resolve the Palestinian problem by force, leaving what by now are some four hundred thousand embattled refugees to make trouble in Lebanon. But at the same time they admire the Israelis' ability to organize their own homeland against external enemies. Lebanon's Christians cannot themselves agree on whether or not they are Arabs. Politically, they might accept the designation; emotionally, they consider Arabs—and especially the Palestinians—to be "them," not "us." What I heard in the voices of Maronites talking about Israelis—or, more specifically, talking about Jews—was different from what I was accustomed to hearing in the voices of either Arabs or Westerners. The Arab voice is weighted with the stark anger of decades of struggle; the Western voice carries a complex burden of centuries of guilt, disdain, awe. The tone of the Maronites, in contrast, is direct, matter-of-fact. "The Jews? They're that tribe down the road," the Maronites seem to be saying. "They moved away for a couple of thousand years, but they're back now. And they're bringing up the neighborhood."

As long ago as the nineteen-fifties, the Israelis contemplated promoting the establishment of a Maronite republic as their ally in Lebanon, but in those days the National Pact worked fine and the Maronites were not interested. The Maronite view changed when Syria loomed and the old fears of Islamization reared up. According to Ze'ev Schiff, Israel's esteemed military writer, one of the first contacts took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place late in 1976, on an Israeli missile boat in the Mediterranean, where Yitzhak Rabin, then Israel's Prime Minister, met with Sheikh Pierre and his two sons, Amin and Bashir. Sheikh Pierre, Schiff writes, warned Rabin that Israel and Lebanon alike would be forced to pay for the Israeli government's failure to resolve the Palestinian problem. The two agreed on the danger they both faced from the P.L.O., and within months the Christian militias were receiving tanks, rifles, artillery shells, and anti-tank rockets from Israel, most of them made in the United States.

Israel soon established close relations with Bashir Gemayel, who, as commander of his father's Phalangist troops, had undertaken to unite the Christian militias into a single, powerful force. Proclaiming a new era of Christian power, Bashir was tough, brash, courageous, and contemptuous of the political leadership of Sheikh Pierre's generation. He had been a soldier most of his young life—in contrast to his older brother, who had made his career in parliament and was a cautious, conventional, aloof figure. In 1977, Bashir began making visits to Israel to solicit more arms from Menachem Begin, who had by then become the Prime Minister, and to argue for an Israeli strike on the Syrians. In March, 1978, Israel conducted a major raid in south Lebanon; though directed against the P.L.O., it was also meant as a warning to Syria, and it may have been a factor in persuading the Syrians not to occupy the Christian redoubt of East Beirut and the mountain.

Meanwhile, Bashir was ruthlessly consolidating his control over the other Christian militias. His chief target was the family headed by Suleiman Franjieh, who had emerged as deeply pro-Syrian and anti-Israel. In June of 1978, Phalangist units led by one of Bashir's lieutenants, Samir Geagea—who today commands the Lebanese Forces—attacked Franjieh's stronghold in the north and killed the patriarch's oldest son, Tony; Tony's wife and child; and thirty-two followers. The battle, which broke the family's military power, intensified a Franjieh-Gemayel blood feud, which continues to embitter Christian politics in Lebanon.

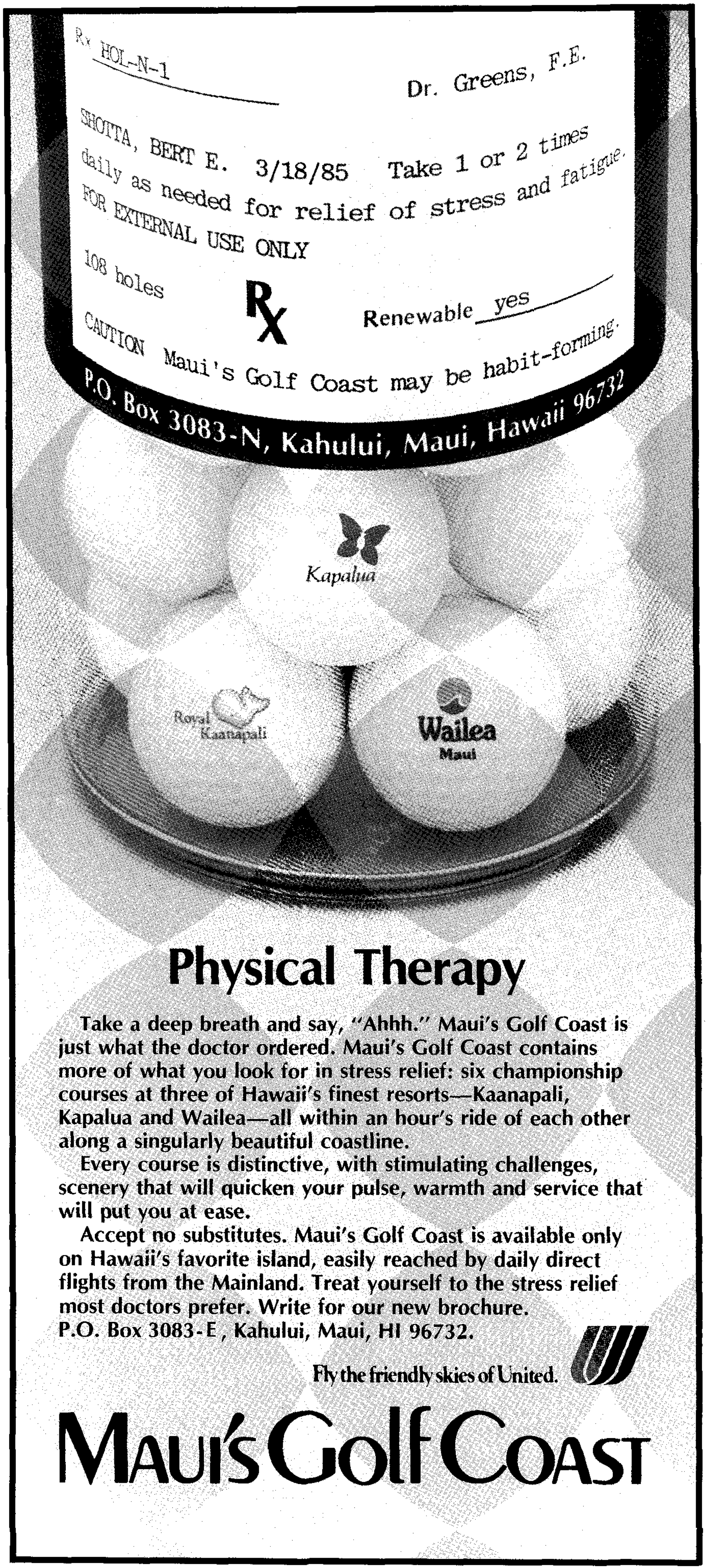
By 1980, Bashir had created the Lebanese Forces, having brought nearly all the Christian fighting units under his command, and he was a major figure in Israeli calculations. After Begin's reëlection in 1981, the Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon, tantalized Bashir with his vision of a new Middle East order. Sharon's grand design provided for Israel's shattering of the P.L.O. in Lebanon, the humiliation of the Syrians, and the installation of a Maronite-dominated government, which Bashir would head and which would negotiate a formal end to the state of war that had existed between Lebanon and Israel since 1948. Accordingly, in June of 1982, Sharon sent the Israeli Army into Lebanon. He succeeded in destroying the military power of the P.L.O. and intimidating the Syrians, and, though he was disappointed with the support provided his Army by the Lebanese Forces, he pressured the Lebanese parliament to elect Bashir President. But, on September 14th, a few days before his scheduled inauguration, Bashir was assassinated, at the age of thirty-four, by a bomb placed in his headquarters—probably by a Syrian agent. Two days later, under an agreement with the Israelis, troops of the Lebanese Forces under the command of a radical young Maronite officer named Elie Hobeika entered the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila to search for P.L.O. stragglers. In the course of the operation, they slaughtered more than a thousand men, women, and children. (The number is in dispute.) On September 21st, the parliament unanimously elected Bashir's brother, Amin—who was free of ties to Israel—to the Presidency, and he was inaugurated two days later. In the confusion that accompanied the succession and the international uproar over the massacre, Sharon was forced to resign, and his design for Lebanon collapsed.

"We made a mistake in sending our people into Sabra and Shatila immediately after Bashir's assassination," a former high official of the Lebanese Forces told me. "No one knew who had killed Bashir, but our people were full of strong feelings, and because the Palestinians were our enemy they became the target. The Israelis had insisted that we enter the camps, to make sure that the P.L.O. was gone. Hobeika's men were accustomed to manning checkpoints and carrying out domestic-security operations—they weren't as disciplined as the regular military forces. Though we knew there were skirmishes between Hobeika's units and the Palestinians, the Israelis didn't tell us about all the killing until at least six hours after it started. I don't think the massacre was anyone's aim. Still, we made a mistake in not attempting to restore control. We also made a mistake in refusing to accept responsibility, but that may be part of our Lebanese mentality. There should have been an investigation, arrests, trials. Instead, we didn't acknowledge anything. The Muslims wanted to blame the Israelis, and Amin allowed them to, so as not to incriminate any Christian parties. The Israelis were furious at taking the rap. It changed their attitude toward the Lebanese Christians."

By then, twelve hundred United States Marines were in Beirut. They had arrived in August, along with contingents from France and Italy, to supervise the delivery of the P.L.O. military units in Beirut from the Israeli siege. After the Palestinians departed for Tunis, the Marines were withdrawn, but they were sent back during the uproar over Sabra and Shatila. Their mission was unclear, though a few months later President Reagan described it as helping Lebanon's government to "maintain order until it can organize its military and its police to assume control of its borders and its own internal security."

Whatever its failures, the Israeli invasion had shattered the status quo in Lebanon. The P.L.O., except for a few scattered troops in the north, was gone. The barriers between East and West Beirut came down, and the Lebanese were once again enjoying their city. The Lebanese Army was making cautious efforts to extend its authority. The Syrians had retreated to the Beqaa Valley, and the Israelis were negotiating terms for their own evacuation. Though the American Marines rarely left their billets at the airport, the Lebanese were convinced that the United States was ready to be the intermediary in restoring Lebanon's sovereignty throughout its territory.

"Bashir had a vision," the former Lebanese Forces officer told me. "As he saw it, the expulsion of Syria from Lebanon would be followed by the creation of a United States–Israel–Lebanon axis, with all its strategic



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ramifications. At the time, that looked feasible. The Muslims by now had had enough of the Palestinians. Their leaders in parliament knew of Bashir's ties to Israel, and yet helped elect him President overwhelmingly. Syria was weak, and it had alienated its moderate Arab friends by its support of Iran in the Gulf War. Bashir's dynamic personality was a major factor, too. If he had lived, he would have pulled it off."

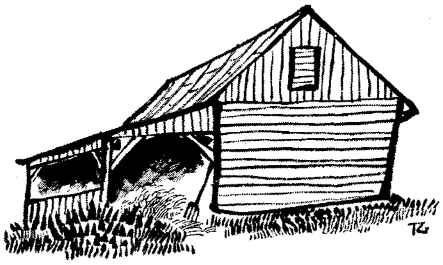
When I met with one of President Gemayel's close advisers (he declined to be identified), he said that while Bashir's vision had been accurately described to me, the view of how it might have been played out was sheer fantasy. Bashir, he maintained, had already begun moving away from the Israelis. According to many accounts, two weeks before his assassination Bashir had had a tumultuous encounter with Begin and Sharon in Nahariya, an Israeli seaside resort just south of the Lebanese border, in which he reneged on the delivery of a Lebanon-Israel peace treaty. "Bashir discarded political opinions like autumn leaves," the adviser told me. Lebanon, he said, was not prepared to sever its ties with the Arabs to become an appendage of Western military strategy.

With an eye to retaining Lebanon's alignment with the Arab world, Amin Gemayel shifted the country's foreign policy away from Israel and toward reliance on the United States. He refused to deal directly with high-ranking Israelis, as his brother had done, and he treated the Israeli Army not as liberators but as occupiers. His first priority was the negotiation of an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, which Israel was willing to accept on the assumption—encouraged by the United States—that Syria would follow suit. Negotiations with the United States as intermediary began shortly after Amin took office. Though all three parties acknowledged the pact's dependence on Syrian endorsement, none of them showed any interest in inviting the Syrians to join in the talks.

Lebanon and Israel finally signed a withdrawal agreement on May 17, 1983. It gave the Israelis far less than they had anticipated when Bashir was in their pocket, but it did give them peace. On the day of the signing, however, the Israeli negotiator handed the Americans a letter stating that Israel would leave Lebanon only if Syria and what was left of the P.L.O. withdrew first. As a further condition, the letter insisted that both Syria and the P.L.O. return any Israeli prisoners taken in the war. The stringency of these conditions raised the question of whether Israel had given up on the agreement, but Syrian President Hafez Assad, his hand strengthened by the recent arrival of shiploads of Soviet arms, immediately characterized it as a Lebanese "capitulation," sealing its fate. Though the parliament ratified the agreement, President Gemayel chose not to execute it, and in March, 1984, the government officially rescinded its approval.

By then, the Marines had gone home. Throughout the second half of 1983, they had been increasingly subjected to sniper fire from Syrian positions in the hills above the airport, and had virtually ceased patrolling. Operating independently, the Israelis had made security arrangements with whatever militias they could find. In September, they withdrew from the Shouf, leaving in charge the Druse, who proceeded to administer a series of devastating defeats to the Lebanese Forces, killing a thousand Christians and leaving many more thousands homeless. Then, on October 23rd, two hundred and forty-one American troops died in their barracks in the explosion of a truck bomb, and on the same day fifty-eight French soldiers were also killed. Believing the Syrians to be responsible, the French made a retaliatory air strike, and later the American battleship New Jersey lobbed a few shells at Syrian targets; neither France nor the United States, however, was interested in troop intervention, which alone held the prospect of reversing the military situation. Assad had found the formula for defeating the West. The Marines quietly departed in February of 1984, leaving America's reputation as a major player in the Middle East in shambles.

"Lebanon's whole policy had been based on the premise of American support," President Gemayel's adviser said to me. "Washington never really grasped what Lebanon was about, and to get out it had to do some cheating. We were promised that the Marines would not leave, but they did. If the May 17th agreement with Israel could not be carried out—that is, if Washington could not persuade Syria to leave as well—then we should never have been asked to sign it. The day before we signed, your Secretary of State said that Syria would come around in four or five weeks. Shultz thought Syria's interest lay in accepting the agreement, but he could not have been more wrong. When the Americans withdrew, the Syrians realized that they could do what they wanted in Lebanon. They still feel that way."



From the start of his term, Amin seemed to be making a genuine effort to be the President of all the Lebanese. Only a part of the Christian community shared his commitment to preserving Lebanon's ties with the Arab world; the other part—notably the Lebanese Forces—referred to him disdainfully as Muhammad. After Sheikh Pierre's death, in August of 1984, Amin reached out to acquire control of the militant Christian party his father had founded, and, through it, to exercise some influence over the Lebanese Forces. But the Forces, which Bashir had planned to merge with the Lebanese Army, were now of no mind to give up their political autonomy, or their dependence on Israeli arms. In the fall of 1984, Amin was instrumental in placing his nephew Fuad Abu Nader in command of the Forces, and for a year Abu Nader worked to achieve a rapprochement between the militia and the President. But then he was overthrown in an internal coup, and Elie Hobeika, of Sabra and Shatila fame, took over the command of the Lebanese Forces.

Despite an avowed hatred of the Syrians, Hobeika then entered into secret negotiations with Syria on reforming the Lebanese government. His companions on the Lebanese side were Nabih Berri, who heads the Shiite Amal militia, and the Druse chief Walid Jumblatt. That the Syrians would negotiate with three militia commanders was unusual procedure, to say the least. Syria's advocates argue that since the militias exercise the real power in the country Syria was correct to deal with them, and the argument is plausible. Lebanon's dons had been in

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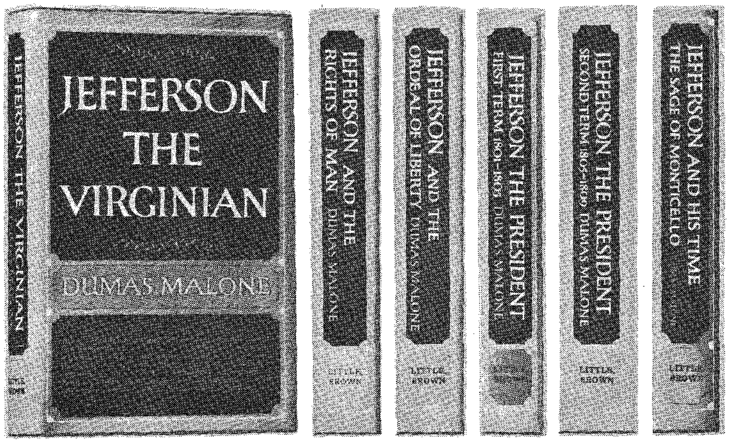
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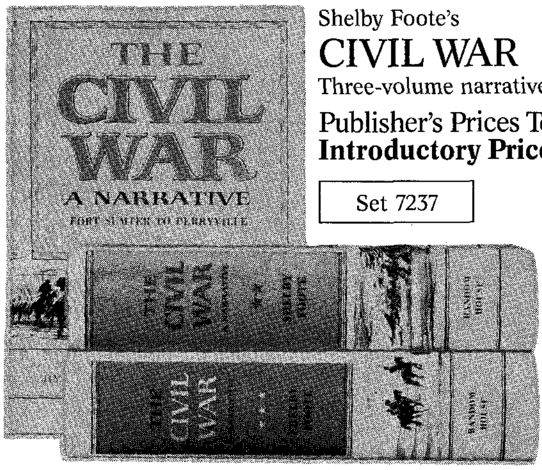
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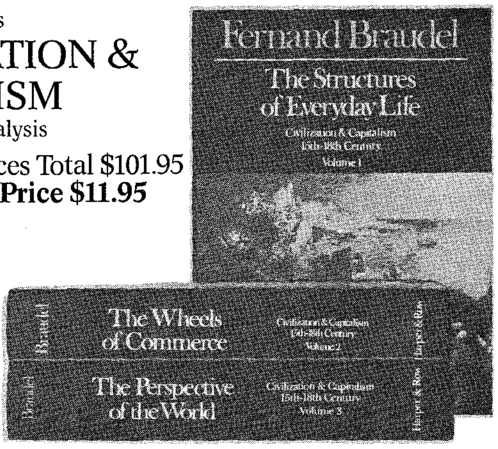
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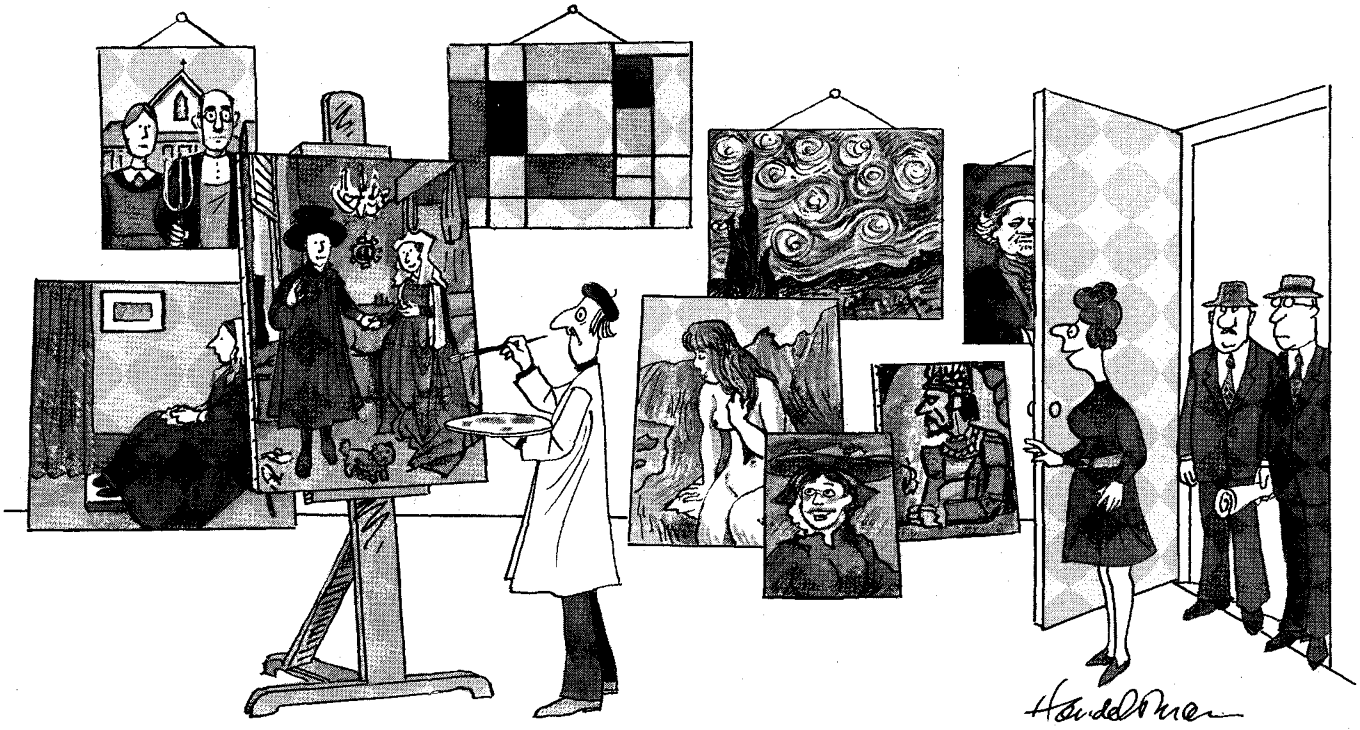

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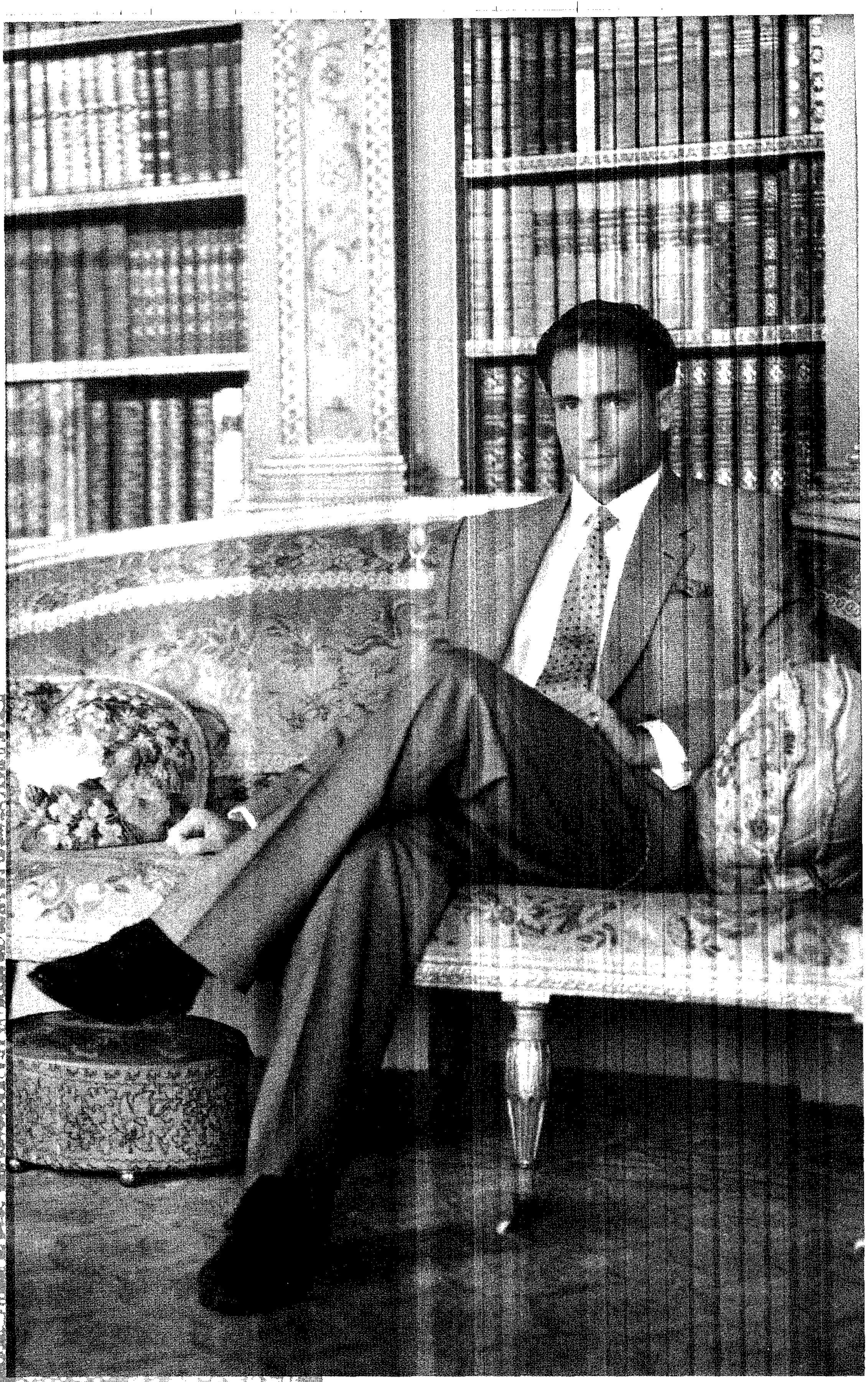
regular contact with one another after the Israeli withdrawal began, often coming together with great fanfare to promise reconciliation. The United States helped arrange splendid meetings in Geneva in 1983 and in Lausanne in 1984, from which emerged a Cabinet of National Union but no national union. Instead, the level of violence was rising, with not only Christians and Muslims shooting at each other but Muslims shooting at Muslims, Christians at Christians. East and West Beirut were once again divided, and two thousand Iranian troops were stationed in the Beqaa Valley, agitating for Khomeini-style fundamentalism. Amid the turmoil, Hobeika, Berri, and Jumblatt were closeted in Damascus with Syrian Vice-President Abdel Halim Khaddam, who is in charge of Lebanese affairs. On December 28th, 1985, the three militia commanders signed the text of the Tripartite Agreement.

The Tripartite Agreement proposed to replace the National Pact of 1943 with a formula based on "deconfessionalization," a one-man, one-vote democracy that would wipe out the guarantees that the Christian community had long considered essential for the preservation of its identity. The Agreement also proposed to give Syria control over Lebanon's internal security, its Army, its schools, its information media, and its foreign policy—especially its relations with the Arab states. In effect, Lebanon was to be transformed, constitutionally and by its own consent, into a Syrian satellite, tied tightly to Syria's aspirations in the Arab world. Muslim and Christian Lebanese alike found the Agreement a brutal assertion of power which ended all pretense of Lebanon's sovereignty. The Lebanese Forces moved quickly in response to what they considered their commander's treason. Two weeks after the Agreement was signed, Samir Geagea attacked and defeated Hobeika and a few troops loyal to him, and then assumed command of the Forces. Hobeika and his men retreated to Cyprus, and shortly thereafter showed up in the Beqaa Valley as a Christian militia allied with Syria.

Meanwhile, President Gemayel had flown to Damascus, where he was pressed hard to endorse the Tripartite Agreement, both by President Assad and by Vice-President Khaddam. Gemayel hoped to put an end to the Agreement while maintaining cordial relations with Syria—objectives that were probably mutually exclusive. He achieved the first, but after he left Damascus the Syrians imposed on the Muslim ministers in Lebanon a boycott of the Presidency. Since then, no official meeting of the Lebanese Cabinet has taken place. Gemayel has become a pariah to the Muslim leadership, and Syria has treated Lebanon's Christians as the enemy camp. In February, 1987, the Syrian Army, after an absence of nearly five years, moved back into West Beirut, on the invitation of the Muslim leaders—and against the President's will.

FROM the minute I stepped off the boat at Junieh, representatives of the Lebanese Forces had been phoning to remind me that I had agreed to spend a few days talking to their people and inspecting their installations. After we finally set the dates, they mentioned casually that I could release my bodyguards during these visits, since they would take care of my security. When I told Elie about this, he said, "No way," and in the course of a half-dozen phone calls I was unable to resolve the difference. So at eight-thirty on the first of the appointed mornings two sets of bodyguards pulled up at the door of my hotel, ready for trouble. I note with some pride that there then ensued, under my presidency, what may have been the most successful negotiation since the start of



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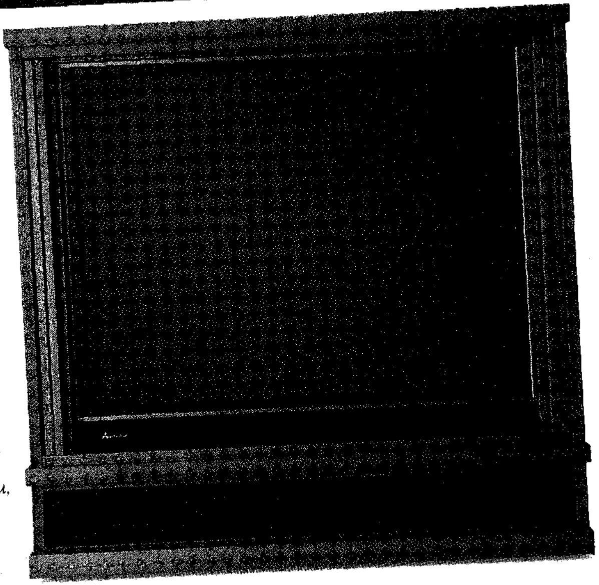

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the civil war. It took half an hour, but when it was over, Elie climbed into the front seat of their car and I got into the back, while one of their men sat next to Roni in the front seat of my rental car. We set off in a four-car caravan, the last two filled with bodyguards from the rival camps. If it is a useful lesson, I would also note that by late the first morning the two sets of bodyguards had become buddies, and by the end of my stay, after an itinerary that covered much of East Beirut, the seacoast, and the mountain, they embraced warmly in parting.

Our first stop was the Lebanese Forces' headquarters, which is near the green line, in the Karantina (the Arabic word for the quarantine area of the port). There I met with the vice-president of the Forces, Karim Pakradouni, a man in his middle forties, who wears horn-rimmed glasses and has an open, easygoing manner. Pakradouni, an Armenian Catholic, became involved in Phalangist politics as a student, and though he now makes his living as a lawyer, he remains a kind of intellectual-in-residence of the Lebanese Forces, a post he has held since Bashir's day.

I asked him what the Forces wanted the country's political structure to be after the war is over.

"We do not expect a Christian sovereignty, but neither will we accept a government based purely on majority rule," he replied. "Since we are against any reforms that will lead to Islamization, we oppose deconfessionalization, which is designed to put an end to Christian power. The Muslims of Lebanon claim to be dominated by the Christians, but in fact they have more power here than we do. What they have is an Arab Lebanon with a Christian face, and what they want is an Arab Lebanon with an Arab face. President Gemayel had the courage to reject the Tripartite Agreement, but he is nonetheless a proponent of Lebanon's historic compromise, in which Christians and Muslims share power. The problem he has is that the Muslims do not want to reciprocate. He held his hand out to them, but they prefer Assad. We Lebanese need to have the Syrians out of Lebanon to achieve reconciliation. Then we will find a compromise. Within this compromise, Islam must accept Christian power in Lebanon, just as we must acknowledge that Lebanon is an Arab state. But an Arab state is not the same as an Arab people, which we are not. The Muslims want Lebanon to be like the other Arab countries, and that is impossible. That's why Lebanon remains like a gas-filled room: light a match and it will blow up."

There are some twenty thousand people on the Lebanese Forces' payroll, about half of them civilians. The money for their support comes chiefly from taxes levied by the Forces—many Lebanese call it extortion—on nearly every transaction in the Christian enclave. (It appears likely that some revenue also comes from Lebanon's drug trade, which is said to be a source of income for Syria and all the militias. The drugs are reportedly produced from poppies grown in the Beqaa Valley, and leave Lebanon for Europe from ports controlled by the militias.) During my tour with the Forces, I visited offices where young volunteers were working at computers to process applications for welfare assistance. I also saw clinics providing medicines to the chronically ill, and I talked to officials whose task is to appeal for funds for the needy to Lebanese Christians living abroad. The Lebanese Forces run public buses in East Beirut, and offer high-school and university scholarships to students who cannot pay tuition. They also provide accommodations to Christian refugees, which I inspected, and though the people I met there complained bitterly of their misfortunes and of the inadequacy of the efforts made on their behalf, I found their lodgings far better than any available to Palestinians in refugee camps throughout the Middle East.

Early one morning, three young officers took Elie and me in a jeep to the green line. There I saw the rubble of what was once the animated center of Beirut: the famous Martyrs Square, with its shattered monument to Lebanese nationalism; burned-out movie theatres with the names "Radio City" and "Roxy" and "Rivoli" still visible over their grand entrances; a mélange of Art Deco and fin-de-siècle French architecture; a big electric sign, advertising Orient watches, that had somehow escaped destruction. Insisting that we keep our heads below the level of the windowsills, our guides led us through a series of gutted buildings, past soldiers sleeping on cots, to look across the line at the mirror image of destruction on the West Beirut side. Climbing over the debris, Elie remarked softly that it was here that his best friend was killed, fighting next to him in a battle in 1981. We later made our way to the shrine that marks the former headquarters of the Lebanese Forces, where Bashir Gemayel died. A ghostly ten-foot-high cardboard silhouette of Bashir looms above a rose garden containing an eternal flame and a granite stone inscribed in Arabic with the names of those who died—the bomb had contained two hundred pounds of dynamite. Three young guards wearing T-shirts sat in a concrete kiosk nearby, automatic weapons slung over their shoulders, keeping a wary watch over the mourners. That afternoon, I visited the Lebanese Forces' military academy, which is housed in an eleventh-century Maronite monastery high up on the mountain, in the village of Ghosta. The director of training there told me that the student officers are taught "Fort Benning" techniques, designed to transform the Forces from a militia ("highly motivated but disorganized, unprepared for protracted war") into a real army ("highly organized, hierarchic, disciplined"). "If the situation isn't settled soon," he said, "we're going to have to fight the Syrian Army, and we'll need all the training we can get."

As things turned out, I never met with Samir Geagea. Several appointments had been made and cancelled—to the embarrassment of his aides, who explained that he was on retreat in a distant monastery. Geagea, an extremely religious man, often goes off to meditate, they said—though it was acknowledged that, having been the target of several recent assassination attempts, he also had security on his mind. The son of an Army sergeant, Geagea is a self-made man, without ties to any of Lebanon's major political families. He grew up in a small Maronite town in the north, attended religious schools, and completed all but one year of medical school (his followers refer to him as Dr. Geagea) before joining Sheikh Pierre's militia. He thinks of himself, one associate told me, as a Christian warrior in the tradition of the Crusaders, and he is by disposition a mystic, who insists that his soldiers go to weekly Mass. He is also deeply hostile to the Christian establishment, which he considers to be compromising and corrupt. His followers among the Forces speak very little of reconciliation with Lebanon's Muslims. They propose to end the civil war by setting up, under Maronite leadership, a Lebanese confederation rather like Switzerland's, with a neutralist foreign policy—a program that translates into giving the Maronites a maximum of power, at a maximum distance from the Arab world.

SHORTLY before my arrival in Lebanon, I was in Damascus, where I had a chance to ask Vice-President Khaddam about Syria's objectives in Lebanon. "Our goal is the end of the civil war, the restoration of Lebanon's national sovereignty, and the establishment of a genuine republican system," he told me. "Confessional extremism in Lebanon"—by which he presumably meant the political doctrine to which most Christians subscribe—"is Israel's objective. Israel needs confessional mini-states in Lebanon in order to justify its own confessionalism." (Uri Lubrani, Israel's coördinator for Lebanese affairs, later told me, "Israel's only interest in Lebanon is security, and if we could make the necessary arrangements we wouldn't need much cajoling to get out of the security zone. We would like to have a strong neighbor that can take care of itself. Unlike the Syrians, we have no vested interest in Lebanon. They want to play the Lebanese game. We don't.") When I asked Khaddam about the prospects for Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, he replied that the question was premature. He suggested that for further information I go to see Marwan Hamade, whom he described as his man in Beirut, and he gave me several telephone numbers at which Hamade might be reached.

Several numbers are usually necessary in Lebanon, because the phone system is chancy, at best. That it is possible to telephone at all from East to West Beirut is astonishing, since the two sides of town are administered by regimes decidedly unfriendly to each other. One of the peculiarities of Lebanon at war, however, is that a single ministry continues to run the phones, just as single ministries—with on-and-off reliability—run the electricity system, the post office, the banking structure, the television. I reached Hamade at one of the numbers Khaddam had

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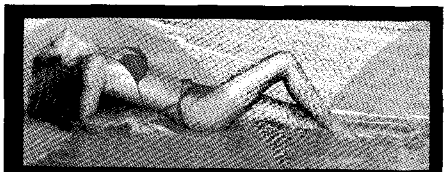

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given me, and he invited me to West Beirut, to talk not only with him but with Salim Hoss, Lebanon's Prime Minister. We fixed a time, and he said that a car would be waiting at the Villa Mansour, the Lebanese parliament, which is situated right on the green line, within what is known as the Museum Crossing—named for the badly battered Lebanese Museum, which stands nearby—where the exchange of visitors between East and West Beirut normally takes place. Hamade added that his people would take care of my security while I was in West Beirut.

I notified Samir Fares of my plans, and he warned me that going to West Beirut was dangerous for an American. "How dangerous?" I asked him. He thought a minute, and replied that there was one chance in ten thousand I would not come back. I said I thought that the odds were good enough, and he raised no further objections, so at eight-forty-five on a Friday morning my team pulled up in front of the Villa Mansour. This was no man's land, and Elie was nervous; he felt that he had to apologize to me several times for not accompanying me farther. I was not the only person crossing, of course. Dozens of cars were lined up in both directions, and there were also hundreds of Lebanese making the journey on foot. Hamade's car, along with a Land-Rover full of bodyguards, was waiting, and Elie and the driver settled amiably on the hour of my return. In a matter of moments, we were in West Beirut, where the atmosphere was clearly different. Posters of Hafez Assad had replaced those of the Gemayels. There was more Arabic, less French, in the signs over the shops. Syrians in shabby khaki uniforms and scuffed boots stood at the street corners. The destruction was far greater, the debris more prominent. With the Land-Rover blaring its siren behind us, my driver forced his way through the heavy traffic and delivered me to a run-down building on a narrow street, where a dozen heavily armed men were waiting. One of them apologized for the fact that the elevator was not working, and escorted me up three flights of stairs to the door of Hamade's apartment.

Hamade is a small man, with a soft and delicate face, and he wore a fashionably cut blue suit that looked Paris-made. The living room of his apart-

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ment, with handsome paintings on the walls and Oriental rugs on the floor, conveyed a threadbare elegance, and adjoining it was a library stocked with books. As we sipped the obligatory coffee, Hamade asked my forgiveness for not inviting me to lunch. "Two or three hours in one place would permit them to locate us," he said quietly. I did not know who "they" were but assumed he meant hostage-takers. (Simon Kassis, who heads the Lebanese counterpart of the C.I.A., had told me a few days before that his agency follows the hostages wherever they go, charting their movements, snapping their pictures. They are heavily guarded by Hezbollah militiamen, he said, and any attempt to rescue them would bring thousands of armed defenders to the site within minutes. His agency has advised the governments concerned to contemplate no military rescue operations, because of the likelihood that the hostages themselves and hundreds of others would be killed in the fighting. Even if the hostages were rescued, Kassis said, Hezbollah would simply go out and seize new ones the next day. Though they are kept in areas under Syrian control—either in the southern suburbs of Beirut or in the Beqaa Valley—only Iran, he said, has the power to free them.) Hamade is a Druse, with strong ties to Walid Jumblatt, and he was obviously well connected in Muslim political circles, but I never fully understood his relations with Khaddam. We talked about President Gemayel, whom he said he distrusted, and deconfessionalization, which he said must be Lebanon's goal, though it need not be accomplished overnight. After about an hour of talk, we went down the stairs to his limousine, which he assured me was fully armored, and drove to the Prime Minister's apartment.

Salim Hoss's official title is Acting Prime Minister. His Cabinet has never been formally confirmed; for that matter, because of the boycott it has never actually met, although its members perform their duties individually. For security reasons, Hoss works out of his apartment, a rather modest one, which I found crowded with petitioners. Whatever its limits, the business of government was going on, Hoss signing ministerial decrees, commissions, and other documents, to be sent across the green line to East Beirut for

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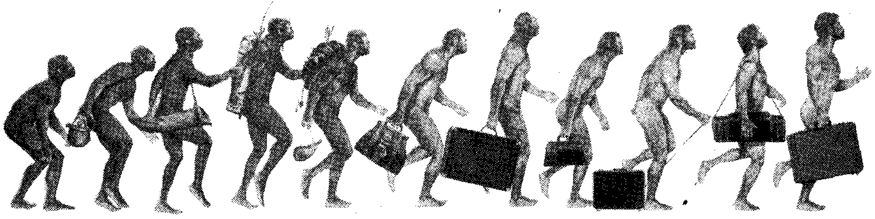

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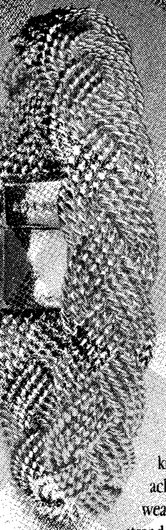

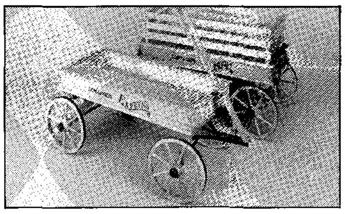

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President Gemayel's countersignature.

In our talk—which Hamade sat in on—Hoss, a tall, amiable intellectual with a Ph.D. in economics from Indiana University, criticized Gemayel for rejecting the Tripartite Agreement. The reason the Maronites did not like the Agreement, he said, was that it would have put an end to their uncontested claims not only to the Presidency but to the powerful posts of commander-in-chief of the Army, head of military intelligence, director of immigration, chief justice, and governor of the central bank. "I had reservations of my own about the Tripartite Agreement," he continued. "But I think we should have sat around the table to amend it. We are a country without authority, and we need the Syrians here. I am not happy about their negotiating the Agreement with the three militias, and I won't defend that. And I'd be among the first to object to any reduction in our sovereignty. But we have to get off the military track and learn to disagree democratically. Once we'd taken the text of the Tripartite Agreement into official channels, I think we could have reconciled Syrian designs and Lebanon's conception of statehood. Amin's blanket condemnation was wrong. Nothing was settled by it."

After we left, Hamade took me in his car on a tour of West Beirut. The celebrated district of seaside hotels, which I had seen years before in its gaudy prime, remains a heap of rubble overgrown by vegetation, and a repository for trash. No effort has been made to repair the old American Embassy. The American University of Beirut still functions (though few Christians attend its classes), and its walled campus seemed an island of tranquillity in the desolation. A Ferris wheel in an amusement park by the sea, which for some reason I had fixed in my memory, was still turning. Even so, the eye is offered little relief from the war, and in a final swing Hamade drove me through ruins that he described as a neighborhood of Shiite refugees living like rodents. The sector is controlled by Hezbollah, he said, and if his intention was to scare me he succeeded. An hour later, after more coffee at his apartment, I was driven back to the Villa Mansour, where I found Elie and my own bodyguards dutifully waiting, and I felt enormous relief as we crossed the green line to the relative safety of East Beirut.

The following week, I had occasion to go back to the Villa Mansour, for a morning meeting with Hussein Husseini, the speaker of the parliament. The Lebanese parliament was last elected in 1972, and though its original mandate long ago expired and only seventy-six of its ninety-nine members remain in office, it is still Lebanon's recognized legislative authority. Husseini, as the third member of the Lebanese confessional triumvirate, is the government's highest-ranking Shiite, and he is also the chief spokesman for moderate Muslim interests. Most Christians hold him in high regard—at least, by contrast with the radical Shiites of Hezbollah—because, though he is under constant pressure from the Syrians, he remains a patriot. Mousy in appearance, with thin hair and a gray mustache, Husseini was the only Lebanese official I encountered who spoke to me through an interpreter. I began by asking him to assess the fear so often expressed by Lebanese Christians of being swamped in an Islamic sea.

"I acknowledge that some of the Christians' fears of Muslims are justified," he replied. "There are extremists among the Lebanese Muslims—I'm talking of Hezbollah, and even of Amal—who create fears. The real Muslims have a responsibility to relieve this fear. But some of the Christian fears are inventions by people who do not want to be reassured. There are militant elements in the Christian community—I'm referring to the Lebanese Forces—who trade in fear. Regrettably, President Gemayel is now their prisoner. Our objection is that he has not done enough to free himself."

I asked Husseini whether the Syrian occupation, like the Israeli and Palestinian presence, was not a problem for Lebanon. He hastened to correct my terminology. "The presence of Syria in Lebanon is not an occupation," he said. "Syria entered Lebanon at the request of the Lebanese authorities, and it is Syria's duty to remain as long as Lebanon is occupied by Israel. Syria is also here to defend itself, because if Lebanon disintegrates Syria is not safe. As for the Tripartite Agreement, I disagreed with it even before the President of the Republic rejected it. But it was intended for discussion in the proper national institutions. Peace cannot be

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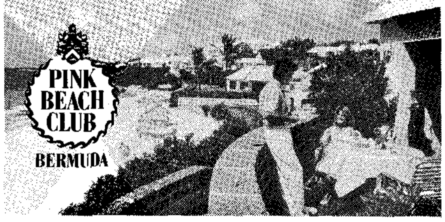

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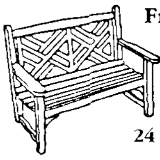

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achieved by militias. It is against the nature of things. How can the militias be constructive in rebuilding the authority of the state when they want to perpetuate their own existence? What we need is a strong central government that will reinforce the Army and send it south to end the Israeli occupation. That is the first step in restoring our sovereignty. Let's not forget that the same Lebanese who hold out the olive branch to Israel are aiming their guns at Lebanese Muslims. Fortunately, President Assad is a miracle man, who has always stood at the side of Lebanon. Syria, our sister, is aware of the dangers from these extremists and is prepared to stamp them out."

When I told President Gemayel that Husseini and Hoss had complained about his rejection of the Tripartite Agreement, he replied disdainfully, "How could they say otherwise? Christians feel that the Syrian system is built on terror, and that our Muslims are scared. The Muslims criticize me for refusing the Tripartite Agreement, but they are secretly grateful for my courage. To say that the Lebanese could negotiate with Syria over the terms of the Agreement is to believe that a woman can be a little bit pregnant. Husseini has to say what Damascus tells him to say. He is the one who would not convoke the parliament to discuss the Agreement, because the Syrians knew that it would not survive an open discussion. Husseini and Hoss go for everything to Khaddam, who is a very tough guy. Khaddam seems to be receiving Lebanese all day long. It's a wonder he has time for anything else."

I met with the President in the Baabda palace, a sprawling L-shaped building of glass and marble panels. Surrounded by woods on a low hill at the south edge of East Beirut, the palace overlooks the airport to the northwest, the Shouf to the southeast. We were alone in our talks, which took place in his ceremonial office, a high-ceilinged room decorated with two clay vases from Lebanon's pre-history and a shelf of elegantly bound books. Gemayel, who was chain-smoking Gitanes, proved to be feistier and more aggressive than I had anticipated. When I asked him about the charge made by both Lebanese and outsiders that indecision at the start of his term had led to missed opportunities, he re-

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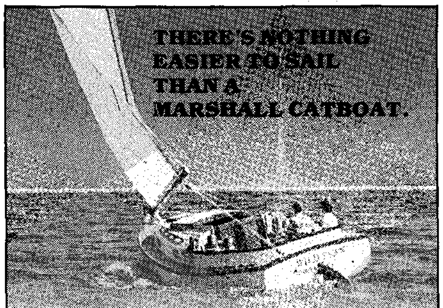

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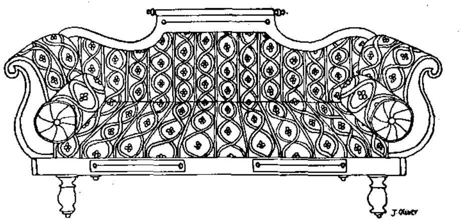
plied vigorously. "I would have liked to move more quickly toward national reconciliation," he said, "but the negotiations with Israel were very difficult, and after eight years of war there were deep fissures in our society. We were a very sick country. I invited all the major Muslim and Christian leaders to Baabda to work for a reconciliation. Unfortunately, events ran away from me. Now Assad wants to arrange the region so that neither the Lebanese nor the Palestinians can deal with their national affairs without Syria. He hated the fact that we were negotiating Israel's withdrawal like a sovereign state, without consulting him—though I kept Syria apprised of every development. He considered the May 17th agreement a *casus belli*."

The President acknowledged that he had disputes not only with Syria but with extremists in the Christian community. His basic difference with the extremists in his own camp, he said, was his belief that Lebanon's Christians need the Arab world and would make a grievous mistake in trying to create a nation that was alienated from it. "In the Arab world, we are vital as a bridge between East and West," he said. "That is our essential role. It is in our fundamental interests as Christian Lebanese to be Arab. The Christian community cannot live in a ghetto. Bashir recognized that Lebanon could not live without a national consensus, and that's when he made a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn, away from Israel. When he was elected President, Bashir became Amin."

Amin Gemayel is one of those who lay the blame for the civil war on outsiders, maintaining that the Lebanese, if left alone, will resolve their differences quickly among themselves. "The Lebanese are marionettes," he told me. "They are manipulated by exterior powers. Yasir Arafat started the war. His interest was to grab Lebanon, in alliance with the Druse leadership. Then Syria and Israel began to feed the war. My brother was frustrated at being unable to do anything about the Palestinians, and the Israelis were ready to provide him with arms, so naturally he turned to them. I don't want to underestimate our responsibility as Lebanese for the situation, but I don't want to overstate it, either. Today, no militia could last for more than a few days without arms and munition from the outside—though the Lebanese Forces have acquired a great deal of freedom by raising funds through the taxation of the Christian community. Once the state is restored, they'll have no more access to money, and they'll have to reconcile themselves to lawfulness. Among them are those who want the Christians to set up their own state—I find them not evil but foolish; they believe in Santa Claus. Right now, their leadership is pushing confederation, but Lebanon is too small for confederation. We will reform the government—to have more decentralization, which is necessary for a diverse society—but that is different from the autonomous powers contained in confederation. As for deconfessionalization, Lebanon can set it as a goal. In fact, confessionalism was always looked upon by the Lebanese as temporary. But we can't eliminate it in our legal texts until we have eliminated it in our mores, in our ways of thinking. Political reform, yes. But not deconfessionalization—at least, not yet."

I WAS indebted to Samir Geagea—in a manner of speaking—for providing me with the means to leave Lebanon by a different route from the one I arrived by. As part of their social-welfare work, the Lebanese Forces run a ferry service from Beirut south to the Israeli security zone, where many Christians still live. One morning at four o'clock, on a stony beach near the Karantina, I embraced my friend Elie and his men, and mounted an improvised gangplank that extended to the boat's stern. The ferry, which looked barely seaworthy and might have come straight out of a Joseph Conrad novel, was named the Gray Wing. It was eighty feet in length and carried some hundred and fifty passengers—ranging from the very old to couples carrying babies, and students on their summer break—who were sprawled across the deck among cardboard suitcases and plastic sacks. Under twinkling stars, the Gray Wing weighed anchor, took a wide swing around West Beirut, and turned south, out of sight of land. Security, I was told, determined both the hour and the route. The sea was calm and a cool breeze blew, for both of which I was grateful as the hours passed and the sun rose higher. The passengers, without food or toilets, were cheerful but clearly uncomfortable and restless. At about ten, an Israeli patrol boat, its guns trained menacingly, approached and circled within fifty feet, then shadowed us for half an hour. At eleven, the Gray Wing finally tied up at Naqoura, and, under the watchful eyes of Israeli soldiers, its exhausted passengers disembarked.



Naqoura is a Lebanese fishing village three or four miles north of the Israeli border-crossing of Rosh Hanikra. Three years ago, the Israelis laid a huge concrete slab perpendicular to the beach, and thereby turned the village into a commercial port. A good-sized container ship was docked there as we pulled in, and neither the Israelis nor the Lebanese merchants milling at dockside were reluctant to talk about it. The ship, they said, was one of several that shuttled regularly, by arrangement between the Lebanese Forces and Israel, from Naqoura to East Beirut, carrying a variety of Israeli products, chiefly food. That morning, Israeli farm trucks sat on the dock while their cargo of watermelons was transferred to large metal containers, which were then lifted aboard the ship by cranes. A merchant told me that from East Beirut, where the Lebanese Forces collect port taxes, the food is distributed throughout Lebanon. Much of it, he said, finds its way surreptitiously into Syria. As I left the port area, my passport was checked by an official from the South Lebanese Army, a largely Christian militia that patrols the security zone on Israel's behalf. From there I hitched a ride to the border post, crossed on foot, and called a taxi to take me to Jerusalem.

AFTER returning home from Lebanon in mid-July, I followed from afar the unfolding of the Lebanese Presidential-election campaign, taking for granted that the succession would come about constitutionally. Lebanon's Constitution provides that the President serve a single term, which ends on September 23rd of his sixth year in office. Between July 23rd and that date, a new President is to be elected by a two-thirds majority of the parliament—which now means fifty-one of the current seventy-six members. By the calculation of various vote-counters, there are forty-one Christian and thirty-five Muslim deputies. The Constitution also provides that if the election for some reason does not take place the outgoing President is empowered to name a Prime Minister and a Cabinet, who are to govern the country until a successor is chosen. Under such circumstances, the President is not obliged to honor the requirement that the Prime Minister be a Sunni Muslim. The prospect that the outgoing regime might be replaced by an all-Christian government was assumed, historically, to be incentive enough for the Muslims to coöperate in electing a new Maronite President on time. This is how it had always worked, but by mid-September things did not appear to be turning out that way.

The stalemate was another setback for United States policy in Lebanon. Last September, during the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly, Secretary of State George Shultz—who had steered clear of involvement in Lebanon since the departure of the Marines in 1984—met with President Gemayel and the Syrian Foreign Minister, Faruq Shara, and the three agreed to begin negotiations on constitutional reforms for Lebanon. The goal they ostensibly shared was to help the Lebanese put their country back together again. Soon thereafter, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy and other State Department officials were appearing regularly in Damascus and Beirut as intermediaries between the two governments, but by spring it was clear that talks had once again foundered—chiefly over the old issue of deconfessionalization—and the negotiators agreed that they might better turn to the looming problem of the Presidency.

By midsummer, though some thirty or more Maronite politicians had declared their availability, none had emerged as a favorite. At the time, this did not seem to be a cause for concern. Lebanese Presidents have never been elected by a free vote, having instead been chosen by power brokers who controlled major parliamentary blocs. This year, the chief blocs are controlled by Syria and—it appears—the Lebanese Forces. Since each bloc is powerful enough to exercise a veto over the other, it was expected that the two would somehow come to an agreement

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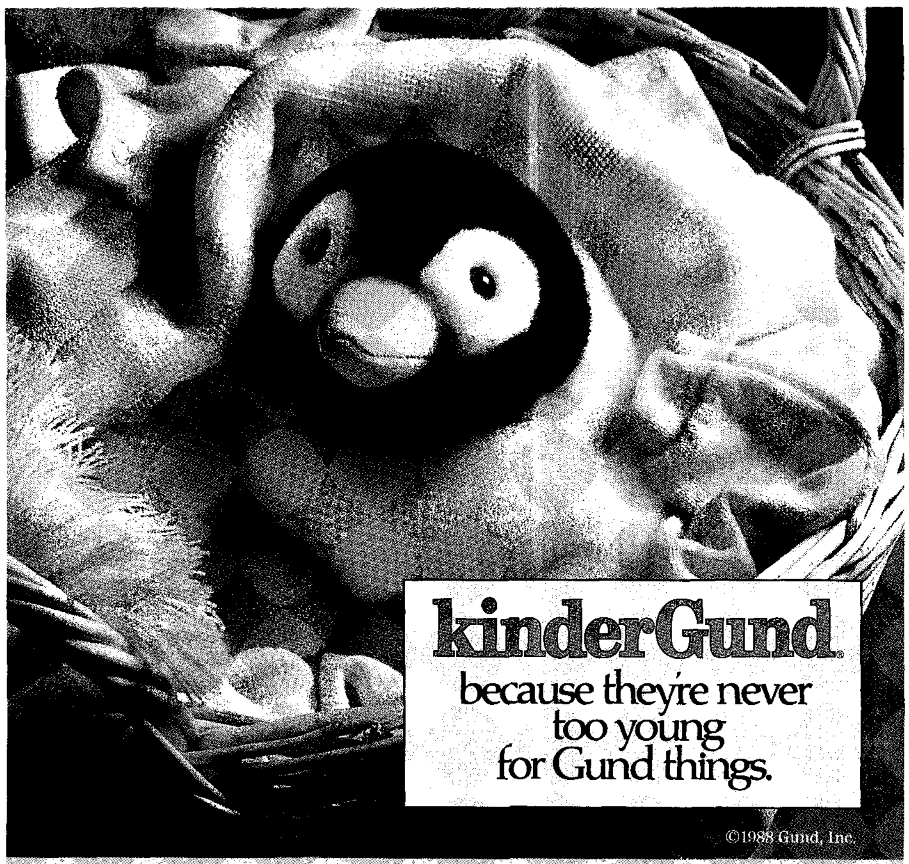

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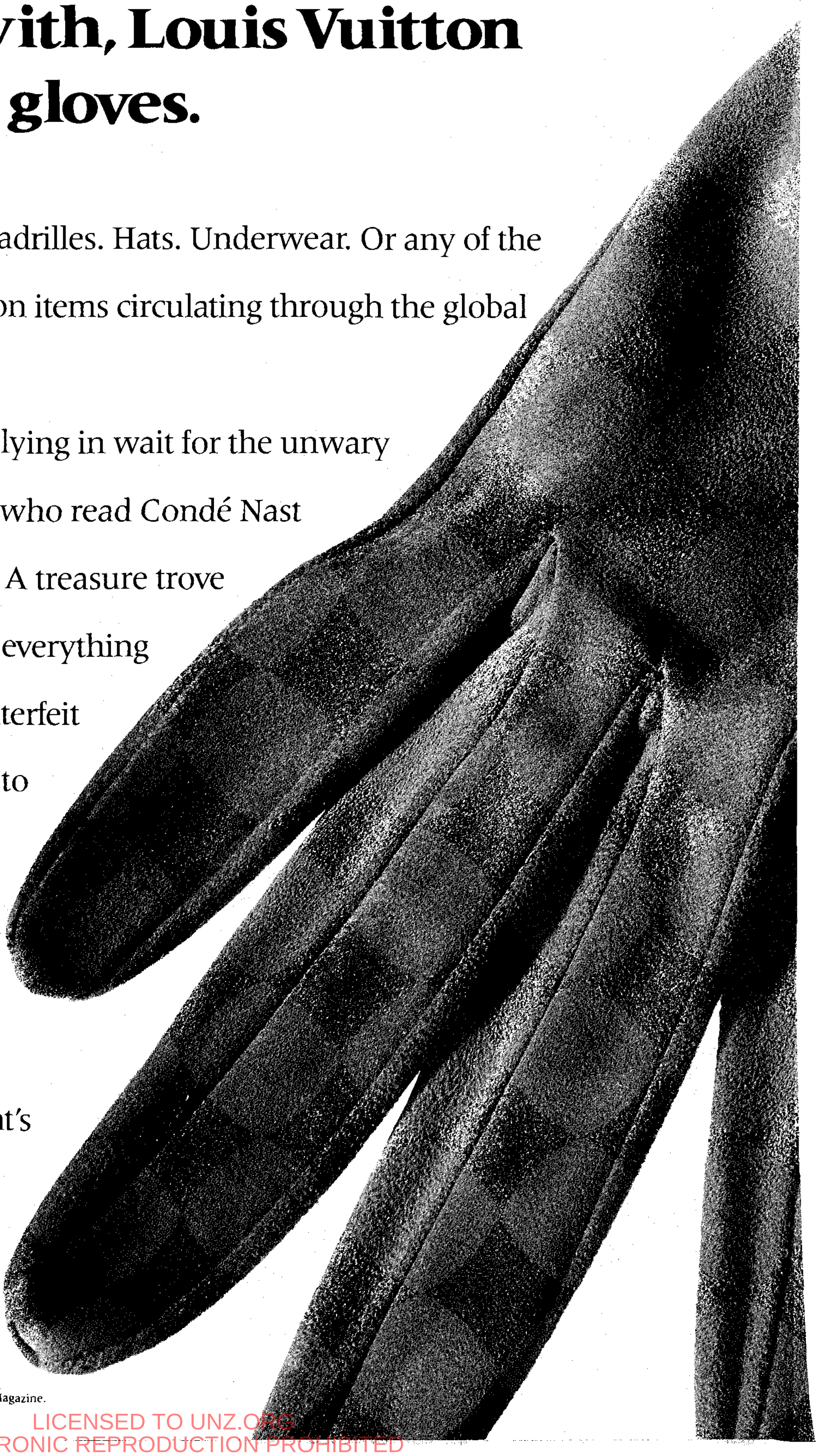

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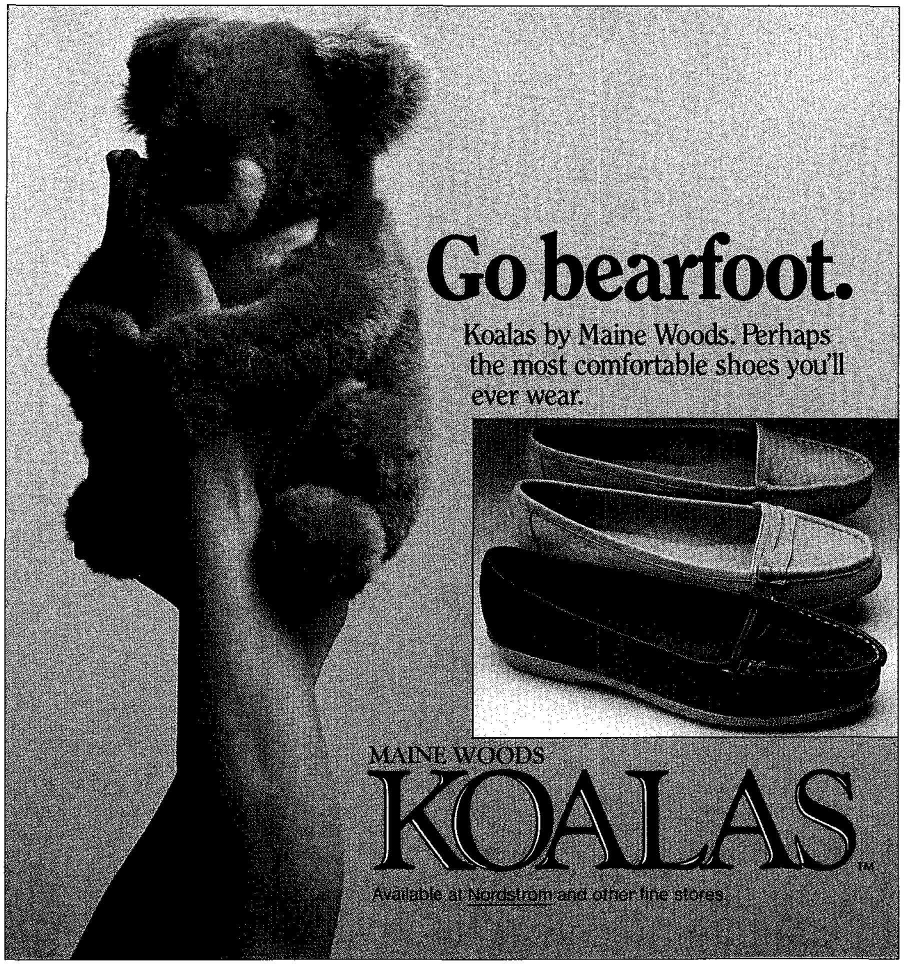
on a candidate who was mutually satisfactory. The process seemed likely to insure the election of a weak President —*someone who had made no enemies*; such a President would probably not greatly contribute to resolving the differences that had brought about the civil war, but at least he would not make matters any worse. It thus came as something of a surprise when the Syrians announced, in early August, that their Presidential candidate was Suleiman Franjieh, the Maronite patriarch of north Lebanon, who is now seventy-eight years old and reportedly nearly senile. Franjieh had been close to President Assad since taking asylum in Syria during a particularly murderous inter-clan struggle in the nineteen-fifties. Lebanon's President when the civil war started, he headed the government that acquiesced in 1976 to Syria's occupation of most of the country. Now, in announcing his candidacy, Franjieh seemed to go out of his way to alienate his fellow-Christians, by declaring that if elected he would invite the Syrians to occupy the one major sector from which they were absent—the Christian enclave. Franjieh's relationship with the Gemayel family—and with the Lebanese Forces commander, Samir Geagea, who ten years ago led the raid in which his son was killed—is one of pure hatred. It seemed inconceivable that the Syrians were serious about him, and yet they pressured Speaker Husseini to convoke the parliament on August 18 for the purpose of electing him President. The parliament, however, did not meet, because too few Christian members showed up to make a quorum. The Syrians, not without evidence, accused the Lebanese Forces of intimidating some parliamentarians to keep them from attending. Several Christian deputies let it be known that if a quorum had been reached they feared being strong-armed by the Syrians to elect Franjieh, and that they welcomed the intimidation as an excuse to stay away.

Since then, Syria has shown few signs of backing off from its position. The analysis I have heard most frequently, even from friends of Damascus, is that Syria is alarmed over the termination of the Iran-Iraq War, which has released an Iraqi army of half a million battle-hardened men to pursue an uncertain course. Traditionally an enemy, Iraq is much embittered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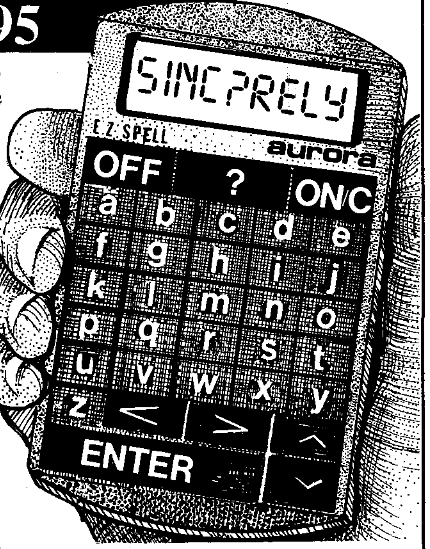

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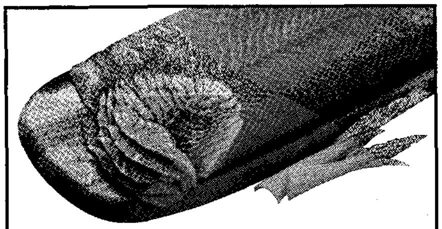
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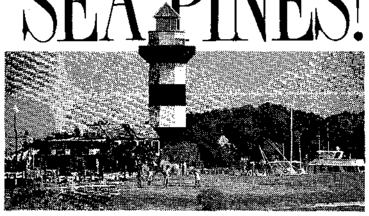
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by Syria's active assistance to Iran during the war, and it may well entertain visions of revenge. Karim Pakradouni made a public journey to Baghdad early in August and, on his return, escalated the tension by letting it be known that the Iraqi government had promised money and arms to the Lebanese Forces. Feeling besieged, Syria seized on Franjieh as a loyal retainer and seemed determined to press him on Lebanon, whatever the cost.

The Syrians also turned on Washington, which they blamed for taking Iraq's part in the Gulf War, for defending Christian interests in the negotiations over the Constitution and the Presidency, and for failing to elicit from Israel some reward for their shackling of the P.L.O. Always a bit paranoid, the Syrians were unapproachable from late August through the first week or so of September, an American diplomat told me. Then they inexplicably appeared to soften, and invited Richard Murphy to Damascus. In five days of talks, they agreed to drop Franjieh, but they would go no further. Their alternative was Mikhael Daher, a Maronite known to the Lebanese as a staunch disciple of Franjieh, faithful to the old man's pro-Syrian line, and a supporter of the Tripartite Agreement. With the new candidacy in hand, Murphy travelled to Beirut, but the Christians were not buying. Rumors circulated of a deal in which Syria, in return for Christian votes, would obtain from Hezbollah the release of some or all of the American hostages. At the State Department, Murphy's men, while acknowledging their support of Daher, indignantly denied a deal, insisting that they saw him only as better than no President at all. Meanwhile, Lebanon's people geared up for harder days ahead. The deadlock presented a real prospect of competing Christian and Muslim governments, of a quasi-legal partition, and of resumption of full-scale sectarian warfare, with Syria intervening on behalf of its Lebanese allies. Few saw any possible outcome that would not aggravate the already tragic condition of the country. —MILTON VIORST

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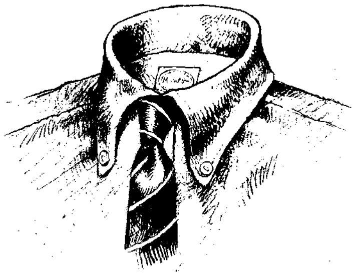
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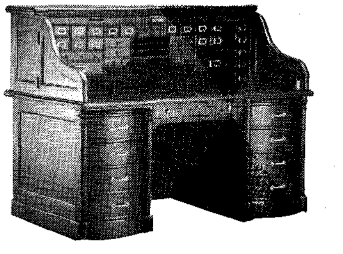
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THE CONTROL OF NATURE

LOS ANGELES AGAINST THE MOUNTAINS—II

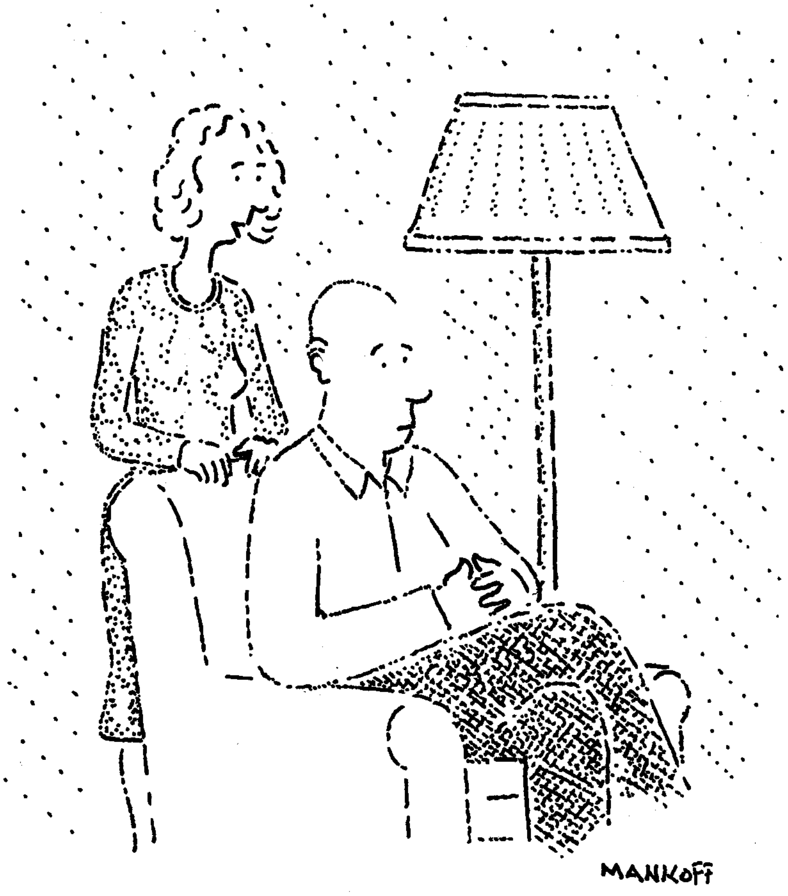
IN Glendora, California, I once came upon a solid block of citrus trees surrounded by residential streets. In all directions from this dark-green stamp sprawled the megalopolitan sprawl—the vast groves of houses, many of them with the pantiled roofs, the pocket arcades, the open-trussed porches, the adobe walls that Reyner Banham, the architectural historian, called Neo-Churrigueresque and much admired for making "both ancestral and environmental sense." From the block of citrus the houses continued west unremittingly, east and south indefinitely, and north about eight hundred yards, where they were stopped by the mountain front. The land under the houses was almost all under citrus just a few decades ago—from the orchards of Glendora and Covina east to the orchards of Pomona and west to Pasadena. Glendora's memorial citrus was surrounded by a low stone wall of stream-rounded granodiorite, the principal rock of San Gabriel Mountain debris. As if the dark trees were not beauty enough, the largest bougainvillea in the United States adorned an edge of this vestigial scene. The bougainvillea was planted in 1901, and now, in urban isolation in the Neo-Churrigueresque, was commemorated by a plaque as California Registered Historical Landmark No. 912:

> The parent stock was brought to California by a whaling ship about 1870, and the vines survive as one of the best examples remaining of the early 20th Century promotional image of California as a paradise.

The block of citrus has since been destroyed to make space for condominiums.

Just down the street was the office of Charles Colver, who grew up in a family of orange growers and was now manager of the experimental forest in the mountains above. He lived in his family's original ranch house, its land reduced to a third of an acre. He had learned in his sixty-odd years that the "C" of the vitamin stands for "Chekhov." A tall sandy-haired man with a long face and an attractively slow cadence of speech, he had seen many slurries of flowing debris, in each a story to tell: "After midnight, the water was rising, still clear, when, with no warning, a big bulk load came through there—a huge wall of mud with a lot of trees in it. It overtopped the flume. The debris was eight feet high."

When the big bulk loads came out of the canyons and went into the orchards of citrus, they knocked over some trees. The debris stayed where it was, and the growers planted new trees. This was the process that had built the fans, and was still building the fans. In a way that housing never could, the citrus accommodated, even when the debris was sixteen feet deep. "We have encroached on nature," Colver remarked to me one day. "When we diddle with Mother Nature, we mess up things. We're living on a floodplain. To look at it, you'd think it was flat, but there's nine hundred feet of difference from Glendora to the ocean. The alluvial fans are that deep. The types of flows that built them go on trying to build them, where we are trying to live."



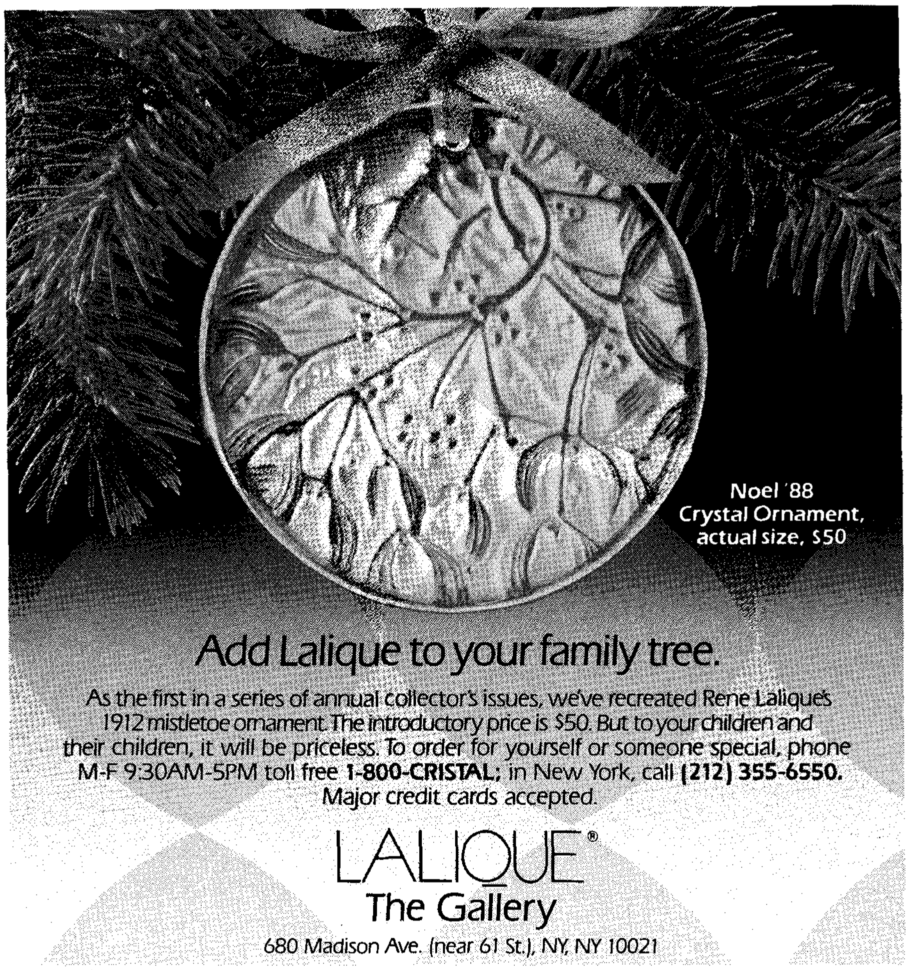
"Come on, dear, you're only as bald as you feel."

Before the citrus, there were ranches; before the ranches, Indians; before the Indians, the primeval scene: huge unencumbered alluvial fans leaning into the fast-rising mountains beside the hazy plain—the broadest coastal lowland in all of California. Despite the sea fog and the general lack of more concentrated water, the climate was so congenial that when people discovered it they were willing to struggle to live in it. The people of Asuksangna were among the first. Their village has become Azusa. For agricultural purposes, they burned grasslands in spring. Inadvertently, they torched untold acreages of chaparral and set up innumerable debris flows. Lightning ignited what the Indians missed. Easily, they adapted to the consequent flows. Ranchers, when they came, settled by the canyons to guard the trickling water, and shot one another over rights to the water, which occasionally carried loads big enough to kill them all. Huge contiguous ranches lined the San Gabriel front—Rancho San José, Rancho Azusa de Duarte, Rancho Santa Anita, Rancho La Cañada, Rancho Tujunga, Rancho Ex-Mission de San Fernando. During the long drought of the eighteen-sixties, horses and mules went into the mountains to bring out water in tanks. The effort notwithstanding, the bones of parched cattle were scattered about the plain. The message was clear: this environment was no less hostile than it was appealing. When the railroads arrived (1876, 1885), they set off a population splurge that has since become known as California's second gold rush. The people rushing in were farmers, and the gold was oranges. From Kansas City, the fare to Los Angeles was for a brief time a dollar. The citrus orchards were established in small units, Colver said, "ten to fifteen acres each—all that one man could tend to." There were soon a hundred thousand acres of citrus. Ditches from the mountains irrigated the trees. Once in a while, the ditches filled with debris. In 1884, in the aftermath of a fire in Soledad Canyon, debris tore away the tracks of the Southern Pacific. (In 1978, in the aftermath of fire, debris wrecked the tracks in the same place.)

In the eighteen-seventies, to connect agricultural towns, local railways had begun to climb the bajada—the coalesced fans. Long straight avenues are there now, steadily rising three and four miles. At least one railway was mule-drawn. When the mules made it to the top of the fan, they went around to the back of the train and got onto a special flatcar, on which they rode downhill. In the eighteen-nineties, electricity replaced the mules, and the street railways began to assume almost the exact pattern of the freeways that have replaced them. Under the influence of the Pacific Electric Railway, communities began to coalesce, like the alluvial fans.

For many decades, there was a moat of oranges between the built-up metropolis and the mountain front. After the wildfires of 1913 resulted in the flows of 1914, inspiring, in 1915, the creation of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, debris was not thought of as the essence of the threat. The operating word was "Flood."

Just after the beginnings of Flood Control, the naturalist John Burroughs lived for a time in Pasadena Glen. The house had broad window seats, wooden casements, a big fireplace made of stream-rounded boulders. Cabinlike in atmosphere, it suggested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something a good deal more remote than a suburb, as well it might, for in its steep and shaded canyon it was truly in the wild and beyond the march of towns. This one-street neighborhood, fingering into the mountains under evergreen oaks, still has an escapist look, although it has all but been caught by the city. Taking in the whole neighborhood in a single remark, Chuck Colver will tell you, "Those people are crazy." He means that Pasadena Glen has the compact dimensions of a bobsled run, and the disassembling mountains hover above it. He means that from time to time all hell will break forth from the mountains. To the question "Why, then, do people live there?" the answer seems to be that they are like John Burroughs: they would rather defy nature than live without it. The glen is so narrow that its houses are perched between streambanks and canyon walls. The nearest debris basin is below them, and therefore not meant to help them. The narrow roadway—crossing, recrossing—laces the stream. In contexts in which most people would say "my driveway," people in the glen often say "my bridge." To get to John Burroughs' place you go over a short private ford. That is the entire driveway. A family named Horton lives where John Burroughs lived. The Hortons have watched flowing debris demolish their neighbors' houses. "People come in and live—as we do—where we really shouldn't live," Mel Horton remarked to me, tendering the explanation that periods between serious floods are often long.

"It's a fantastic place to be in a storm," his wife, Barbara, said. "You hear a sound like giant castanets—boulders clicking together. They're not pebbles. And there is a scent, which is absolutely heavenly, of the crushed chaparral plants. It's so fragrant and beautiful it's eerie to have it associated with something so terrifying. And, God knows, it is terrifying."

"So why do you live here?"

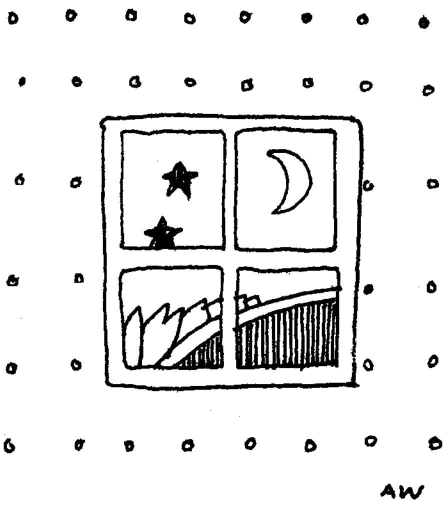
"Freedom," Mel said. "You go to the city for a living. For provisions. Here at home, you don't have a sense of the city. You feel renewed. There is no sense of encroachment. Although there are fifty-five homes in this canyon, the open mountains begin at this point. You're in the sycamores, the oaks. You feel removed from a sense of being surrounded."

Barbara said, "City people have trouble with the stillness here in this canyon. But something is always going on here, among the ground squirrels, the wrens, the wood pewees. There was a butterfly that chased off a bird." A rooster crowed. Barbara continued, "One needs some sense of perspective if you live in a place that has built-in hazards. But, then, what place doesn't? You can have an earthquake anywhere."

Their daughter, Alison, who lives in Alaska and was about to return there, said, "In Anchorage, I'm in a more urban environment than I ever lived in in Los Angeles. When I was in junior high school and went to friends' houses outside the glen, I felt hemmed in. Home was the escape for me here. In Alaska, I escape from home."

The Hortons' friend Roland Case Ross, emeritus professor of biology at California State University, happened to be there as well, and he spoke up to say that the Hortons and everyone else in Pasadena Glen were "recluses—seekers of solace, nature contact, and purism." As if Ross were not. Ross remembered the mountains when the state animal was not yet extinct in the state. The state animal is the grizzly bear. Ross followed bear trails through "fog-drip country" in "chaparral litter to your knees." He knew the wild mountainsides, and how to get back to "Loss Anglus." One rainy day, he was invited to a restaurant in Altadena, and he firmly declined. "Only a damned fool would put a restaurant in a floodplain," he said. The restaurant was destroyed that evening by a debris flow.

Mel Horton said that Pasadena Glen, like so many other canyons where houses penetrate the mountain front, maintains its serenity for years on end until "four inches of rain falls in one hour."



Barbara said, "It catches your attention."

In 1969, after less than two inches of rain fell in one hour the Hortons' house was shaking, debris gouged the streambed and quadrupled its width, neighbors' houses were undermined to the point of destruction, telephone poles danced about like sticks, a big tree trunk heaved into the air and shorted the power line, and debris that missed the Hortons' house went through the house below them. Recalling that night, Barbara Horton said, "Those boulders that came down were like pianos. They formed a dam fifty feet above our bridge. Then the water broke around the sides. The larger part went across the road, toward the Childresses'. Childress wanted to run out his back door with his children. He couldn't. The flow went around his house and destroyed the Hemmingers' place. Hemminger was on the roof rescuing his cat. The Hemmingers eventually moved to another house in the glen."

After the 1969 event, the Forest Service, with "the blessing of the Flood Control people," lined the stream with Gunite in Pasadena Glen. I walked upstream with the Hortons, to the head of the populated canyon, to see what the Forest Service people had done. They had changed a natural stream into a concrete trough. Barbara Horton said, "It's something everybody tries to forget." The Gunite banks were topped on both sides with hundreds of large granitic boulders. Protecting the uppermost property in the glen was a twelve-foot stone barricade. In the stillness, a sound came from the head of the canyon and amplified as we drew near. It was the sound of falling water—falling off a ledge and three stories down, between narrow chasm walls. There were trees rooted in the chasm walls, and brown grass on a slope above the falls. There had been no rain in four months. The sound of the water was as unexpected as the sound of falling water on the moon.

BY the nineteen-thirties, the Thoreauvian recluses were well established in the mouths of canyons, and the city had not yet approached them. Looking down the fan across the orange orchards, they could call themselves remote. It is coolness that makes an orange orange. The air that fell in the evening off the San Gabriel front touched the dark trees with color, and the towns among the foothills were still discrete.

In November, 1933, the chaparral burned in numerous watersheds above Pasadena, La Cañada, La Crescenta, and Montrose, and slopes were left black and bare. Rainfall in amounts that the Flood Control District called a "Noah-type storm" followed in the last days of the year, mobilizing, on January 1, 1934, a number of almost simultaneous debris flows that came out of the mountains, went through the orchards and into the towns, killed dozens of people, destroyed hundreds of houses, and left boulders the size of icebergs far down the fans. (In the middle of all this chaos, the football team of Columbia University went into the Arroyo Seco and defeated Stanford in the Rose Bowl.) Out of Pickens Canyon came a debris slug of such magnitude that it travelled all the way to Foothill Boulevard, crossed it, and passed through the business district of Montrose. A boulder eight feet in diameter came to rest on the main street of town, three miles south of the mountain front. This was the same Montrose to which Jackie Genofile would one day retreat in order to feel safe. The New Year's Day Flood, as people still refer to it, killed thirty-four in Montrose and neighboring towns, and ruined nearly five hundred houses. All over the bajada, Model A's were so deeply buried that their square roofs stuck out of the mud like rafts. Streets of La Crescenta, a mile downhill from where the Genofiles live now, were like the braided rivers of Alaska, with channels of water looping past islands of debris.

The working gravel pit that filled up and fortuitously became the prototype debris basin was in Haines Canyon, just above the village of Tujunga, whose civic infrastructure it happily preserved from otherwise certain annihilation. While the mud, sand, and boulders that were deeply spread on the alluvial fans were demonstrating that a flood of rock was a far greater menace than a flood of water, this inspirational gravel pit was showing what to do about it. With enough money—enough steam shovels, enough dump trucks, enough basins cupped beneath

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the falling hills—Los Angeles could defy the mountains, and append to an already impressive list one more flout in the face of nature.

After Pearl Harbor, rapidly expanding war industries drew people to Los Angeles from all over the United States. They worked mainly in the oil, steel, and aircraft industries and in plastics factories that made butadiene as a substitute for rubber. The ascending effluents of the smelters, refineries, mills, and factories added a great burden to the marine fog layer—made heavier still as the work force moved about in cars. To describe this ochre cumulus, the world's shortest portmanteau word, which had been coined around 1905, was borrowed from London.

Housing developments had to be created. The land under the orchards was an obvious choice, and a lot of citrus fell in the war. Like a spider plant or a wandering Jew, an orange tree is psychologically sensitive. Not surprisingly, a virus broke out in the orchards—a strain known to pomologists as "the quick decline."

When the war ended, the quick decline did not. As Chuck Colver well remembers, "This was a mortal blow. If a grower didn't suffer from it, he thought he would, so he sold to a developer as an easy way out. After the war, the new people stayed on, and it was readily apparent that agriculture and urbanization were not compatible. Citrus relied on smudge pots to protect the trees against freezes. It used fertilizer that was smelly. It created dust in the tilling. It bred flies. Big slow trucks went around full of oranges. Everybody had tolerated all this when oranges were the sole economy, but it was a nuisance to the newcomers. They threw garbage in the orchards. They stole oranges. And, above all, they complained. They passed laws against smelly fertilizer, against smudge smoke, against pesticides. Citrus could not compete. Water became too high-priced. Smog began to affect the trees. The size and quality of fruit deteriorated. A superior product became an inferior product."

Fifty miles of citrus disappeared as the communities coalesced and the megalopolitan census passed eight million. Los Angeles did not spread out like a blooming flower, or grow from a center, like continental ice. It grew all at once all over the plain. It filled in the mountain front. In the late winter of 1938, thirty inches of rain had fallen in six days. Publications of the United States Forest Service later described the event as "the greatest rainstorm in the recorded history of the San Gabriel Mountains." Early debris basins did not pass this test. They filled up and overflowed. They were not designed to separate rock from water. With the rise of population, and the postwar proliferation of development along the mountain front, successive debris dams and accompanying basins—each unique, fitting the conditions of its canyon—became ever more proficient, designed to function like giant colanders. The most recent is Buena Vista Debris Basin, which was built in 1981 at the head of Norumbega Drive, in Monrovia. With its Yale bowlishness, its columnar steel trash racks, its perforated outlet tower, and its two-hundred-foot-wide rock-filled concrete dam, it represents the state of the art. The confident owner of a house just below it has landscaped his place with sandbags.

Generally, the debris basins work. People can lie peacefully in their beds and listen to the thunk of boulders heading into traps. Carter Canyon Debris Basin, in Sierra Madre, is in an extremely steep gorge under high-rising mountainsides. Carter Canyon is where Wade Wells, a hydrologist with the United States Forest Service, pointed out to me a number of rock outcroppings about thirty feet above the dry streambed one arid afternoon and said they were the lips of falls. The debris basin was built in 1954. In the autumn of 1978, eight different fires denuded the mountains above. The Mountain Trail Fire—the one most closely related to Carter Canyon Debris Basin—consumed fifteen hundred acres. During a storm a few weeks later, Wells went to Carter Canyon and watched hundreds of tons of mud and boulders coming over one of the falls. The basin caught it all effectively. The basin was cleaned out, and trucks took away the debris. In 1980, when Carter Canyon Basin filled again, water alone went over the top.

There cannot be a debris basin under every rock and rill. Dennis and Susan McNamara live at 3529 El Lado Drive in Glendale, below the mouth of a minicanyon that drains about twenty-five very steep acres covered with chaparral. They had lived there for five quiet years when the watershed blazed like a ceremonial torch, September 22, 1975. Came the winter rains of 1976, and a debris slug appeared in their back yard. It filled their swimming pool. It continued across the patio and broke through glass panels into their house, where it eventually found the kitchen door and proceeded into the street. In 1977, another debris flow appeared in the McNamaras' back yard, filled the swimming pool, advanced into the house, found the kitchen door, and went out to the street. In 1978, when still another debris flow appeared in their back yard and filled their swimming pool, the McNamaras were nothing if not experienced. They slid open their glass doors and stood aside from the entering rocks. "Just the one fire started all this," Susan told me not long ago, as she showed me around. The by now revegetated slope was a steep handsome backdrop to the house. The pool was sparkling—a little debris basin in itself, all cleaned out and ready for what might come. "When it comes, it sounds like an avalanche," she said. "You can hear it start to rumble. The rocks crash against the house. Afterward, we thought of leaving, but you can't sell a house in this situation. You'd have to tell the buyers the endangerment of it. If it rains, we get very apprehensive. We still call each other and say, 'Are you all right?' "

The City of Glendale responded to the McNamaras' situation by giving them free grass seed. "That's all," Susan confirmed. "I can't say enough about the City of Glendale. In Palos Verdes—for the rich people—they *move hills*."

A debris basin that serves well in one year may not be adequate in another. It may be able to handle a fire-flood sequence of the magnitude for which it was designed, but a debris basin is not a strip mine. After a truly exceptional fire followed by a most exceptional flood, something like a strip mine is required. Designs are focussed on the "ten-year flood," the "twenty-five-year flood," the "fifty-year flood," and maps depict the "once-in-a-hundred-years flood," but these terms rest on data of only a century and a half and represent educated guesses. Rain, moreover, is merely one factor. No wonder there are times when the basins fail. When the debris hit Glendora in 1969, it scarcely slowed up as it filled two debris basins with an aggregate of a hundred and fifty thousand tons and flowed on into town. If you go up Country Club Drive, in Sunset Canyon, Burbank, you note a thick rind of

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defenses. With shored timbers, with six-foot walls of reinforced concrete or piled stone, properties are presented to the narrow street like medieval façades to an open sewer. There are three debris basins along Country Club Drive. There were two in 1964. The upper one failed. The slug that came down the street and invaded houses killed Aimee Miller, the wife of Frank Sinatra's piano accompanist. Her home was knocked off its foundation. Her husband was swept downhill and into a debris basin. He survived by hanging on to a Volkswagen that was part of the debris. One of their neighbors said, "When you live in a drainage ditch, you come to expect these things." Another said, "People often ask why we continue to live here. We have a fire nearly every year, and the floods follow. There isn't a prettier, more secluded canyon in Southern California—when it isn't on fire or being washed away. Each time we have a disaster, only one or two families move out, but there are hundreds standing in line waiting to move in. People live here, come hell or high water. Both come, and we still stay."

In the same era, a debris barrier failed above the ranch of G. Henry Stetson, the hatmaker, who had established his spread at the west end of the San Gabriels, in—of all places—the mouth of Sombrero Canyon. Below the pantiled roof, the balconies of the hacienda dripped with bougainvillea over mud deeply entering the doorways below. The floors were covered three feet deep. The furniture was destroyed. Lawns and gardens were buried under boulders and mud, which filled the Stetsons' million-gallon swimming pool and spread through their orchards, too. Sixteen feet above the streambed, a reinforced-concrete crib member that weighed two hundred and eighty pounds smashed against a tree, and the four reinforcing rods were bent around the trunk. In all, twenty-five thousand tons were added to the Stetson Ranch. The freshly burned watershed yielded altogether at least four times as much. The Stetson Ranch exists no longer. A new debris basin was built above the site. Its name is Sombrero.

Despite the recurrence of events in which the debris-basin system fails in its struggle to contain the falling mountains, people who live on the front line are for the most part calm and complacent. It appears that no amount of front-page or prime-time attention will ever prevent such people from masking out the problem.

Woman at her mailbox on a street called Bubbling Well. In 1969, under six feet of debris, Bubbling Well stopped bubbling. "They've built more dams up there in the mountains," she says. "It will never happen again."

There are lots of mailboxes along the mountain front.

"There is no problem now."

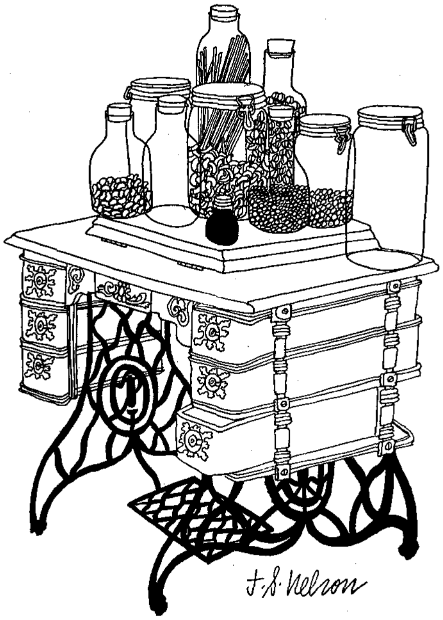
"Our property is not affected."

"I think we're all pretty well covered. I'm hoping so. The water rushes down quite nicely in the wash."

"The fire was three years ago. It's not supposed to flood. I cancelled my flood insurance last year."

"No, we're not concerned. We lived through the San Fernando earthquake."

Many people regard the debris basins less as defenses than as assaults on nature. They are aesthetic disasters. To impose them on residential neighborhoods has been tantamount to creating a Greenwich full of gravel pits, rock quarries at either end of Sutton Place. The residents below Hook East were bitter when the basin was put in. Months later, the bulldozer tracks were still visible, they said, meaning that nothing had happened—no debris had come, and not even enough rain to obliterate the tracks. So why had the county used taxpayers' money to build something so obviously unnecessary? A form of answer came when the basin overfilled in one night. Afterward, people criticized the county for not building basins of adequate size.



When I talked to Peter Fay, who lives just below Sierra Madre Dam, he said there was a fire in his area every six or seven years. He found that "very exciting, almost fun," he said. "I have no intention of leaving the foothills. The views are so marvellous. The level of concern is quite low. If you live up in the hills, you have less smog, better views, more interesting contours—a sort of bosky sort of place. Part of my house was destroyed in 1969, but I am confident it won't happen again." Fay is a professor of history at Caltech.

In 1977, when Dan Davis was an engineer at Flood, he approached another homeowner below Sierra Madre Dam to warn him of the almost certain consequences of a recently extinguished fire. The man said he had lived through the 1938 flood, he had lived through the 1969 flood, and he was not concerned now. He must have had hide on his teeth. When the 1978 debris flow came, his place was buried deep in debris, but he survived.

People of the mountain front make remarkably hardy clients for consulting geologists and engineers:

"If you point out a potential geologic hazard, they say, 'I'm ready to live with that.' People really don't believe what it's like until they go through it."

"Most people don't give it a thought. Or they minimize the importance of it."

"People forget so soon. In a couple of years, they build again."

"They are playing ostrich."

As the larger rivers come into the Los Angeles plain, they sometimes thrash so violently that they pick up fresh debris from under people's houses. In 1969, when Marilyn Skates was twenty-six years old, she watched the houses of six neighbors go into Tujunga Wash. Her own house, swaying, hung on the brink. "What good does it do hanging there like that?" she cried. "Why doesn't it fall in like the rest? Go. Go. Go. Fall over. How can a house just stand there like that?"

It couldn't. The house slid into the Big Tujunga and was ground up so violently that pieces of it flew into the air. Her neighbor James Dubuque, out on the street and concerned about the fate of his own house, was about to go back inside when a police sergeant said through a bullhorn, "If you go back into that house, prepare to take your

Last step. That house is going into the wash—now!”

DAN DAVIS showed me some pictures of houses wrecked by a debris flow in Ebey Canyon that same year. I asked him, “What do people think when they buy such places?”

He said, “They never see the previous event. They move up there five, six, seven and more years, and nothing happens. They don’t realize the tremendous change taking place in the watershed as it gets ready for another fire. Eventually, fire threatens them. Then flood. And they are on the Santa Anita Fault. Everywhere on the mountain front, people say, ‘I’ve lived here *x* years. I’ve never seen any flow.’ They won’t, until there’s a fire.”

When I talked with Richard Crook, a consulting geologist, he said, “Most people are not conscious of the problem. Developers will buy a piece of property without thinking, for example, that it’s at the mouth of a drainage. The engineers should be cognizant of it, but they’re not. There are ordinances now, but in the past there were not. Every bad year, the agencies stiffen their rules. All this assumes that we know what the maximum situation is. Maybe we have not yet seen the hundred-year flood, or even the fifty-year flood. There are a lot of disasters up there waiting to happen. The people want to live in these areas. When they buy houses, they don’t know what they are getting into. The entire county ends up paying for these people’s problems. The people should be assessed for these things. They are localized problems. The whole county is subsidizing people on the front line.”

Not to mention the federal government. Los Angeles is obviously rich (than an indigent, threadbare city could never put up the defenses that Los Angeles has rigged against the attacking mountains), but no city is rich enough to pay off the family of every soldier who dies at the walls, or underwrite every house that fills up with boulders. Enter the generous people of the whole United States, whose revenues will help to cover the loss of a house constructed in the barrel of a canyon. The federal insurance is expensive. Its varying rates are based on zones of relative danger and on the quality of local flood-protection programs. On the average, a yearly premium of just under a thousand dollars

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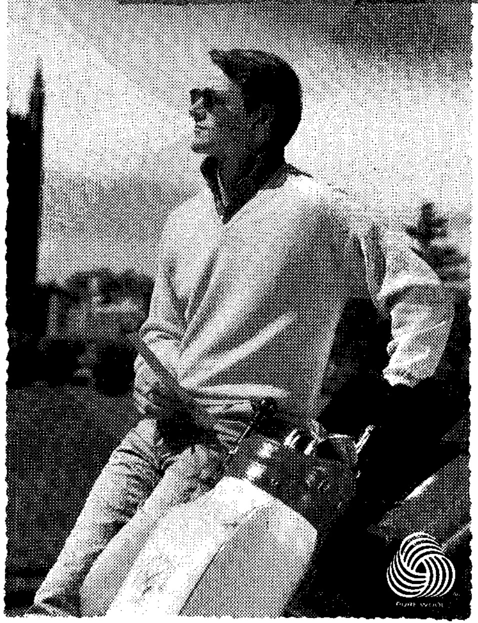

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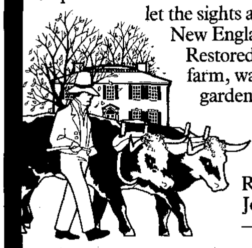

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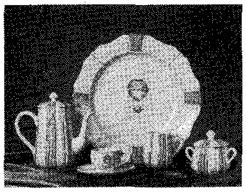

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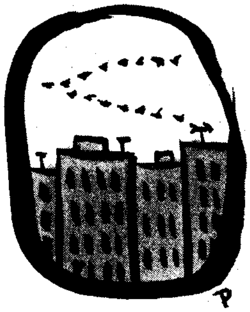
will buy the maximum: two hundred and forty-four thousand dollars' worth of coverage. One does not have to be an actuary to see the general odds. Of, say, ten thousand houses along the mountain front, three to four hundred will be zapped per decade. Quite recently, a few private companies have begun to write such insurance as well. You can get lower rates if you have a "floodproofed house," which means that you are armed with deflection walls and other defenses to repel debris and send it elsewhere. In which case you also need a lawyer. Against debris flows and all other kinds of flood eighty per cent of the mountain-front people have no insurance at all.



It's an interesting bet. If you don't have a fire, you could go fifty years without a flood. After a fire occurs, people from the Sedimentation Section of the Hydraulic Division of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works are swift to tell homeowners what to do when rain comes. After studying someone's property, they present a "Post-Fire Protective Advice" sheet, on which one or more of twelve printed suggestions have been checked off. One suggestion is "Construct pipe-and-timber deflector." Another is "Board windows and/or doors with plywood." Another is "Consider evacuation during heavy storms."

Arthur Cook, the Acting City Manager of Glendora, recalls with some choler the procedures of 1968 after twenty thousand acres burned above town. When I visited his office in City Hall, he said, "The whole face of the hills burned. We started right then to prepare for the winter rains. We knew what would happen. It was evident. We went to the government agencies—county, state, and federal. We were met with total negativism. They could not help *prevent* a disaster, they said—they could only come in after the fact. We thought, If no one's going to help us, we'll try to help ourselves. We held neighborhood meetings. We recommended plywood walls, block walls. We told people they'd have to make their own preparations. People said we were alarmists. They'd lived here fifty years, and, by God, it had never happened. So the city installed batten boards along some streets. On Rainbow Drive, we erected chicken-wire fences with sheets of plywood. We deployed thousands of sandbags."

Sally Rand lived in Glendora, pretty far up on the fan. At Christmastime that year, in the Kingdom of Rubelia, she did her phan dance at Mike Rubel's castle. Four weeks later came the devastative rain. Listening to it thump his roof, Art Cook said to himself, "This is the night. I'd better get down to the Hall." He got into his car and went down Palm to Grand; as he turned onto Grand, the flow met him. It picked up his car and carried it a quarter of a mile. ("I just sat there, scared as hell.") Eventually, his slithering wheels found traction, and he drove off none the worse for having been a part of the snout of the debris. "A wave six to eight feet high came out of Rainbow Canyon," he said. "The rock, debris—everything was suspended in the liquid mass. Horrendous boulders, trees, car bodies were suspended in the mass. It sounded like a train—a runaway express train. Just a roar."

As an average populace in a shamefully litigious nation, the people of Glendora took their town to court. "After we busted our butts for months trying to help people, we ended up being sued by the people we tried to help," Cook said. "They said in court that we were cognizant there were going to be problems and we did not stop Mother Nature in her tracks. You read about flooding on the Mississippi. They don't sue the city for not keeping the Mississippi from going over its banks. Here they do sue the city for not keeping the mountains from eroding." The city lost.

I asked Cook how things appeared at the moment. After mentioning a couple of new debris basins and some crib dams, he said, "The areas are protected now. People rebuilt. People had their home and they were going to keep it. People started listening to City Hall. There's no way to guarantee that Mother Nature won't go on a rampage, but if it did we have the facilities to cope with it. Now we're in great shape, with no concern for the future."

In the fifty miles of the San Gabriel front, almost all levels of income are represented, from multifamily dingbats to pastury enclaves with moats and armed guards. Under isolated tufts of old citrus are electrically operated iron gates leading to palm-lined driveways between retaining walls of granodiorite debris. Relentlessly, builders go on finding tracts for new housing. They often borrow something from the precipitous slopes—a practice known as mountain-cropping. Whether an owner has a two-million-dollar house protected by nothing more than a trash rack in front of a culvert or a hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar hut with a large debris basin right beside it, debris-flow information is supposed to be a part of the exchange when houses are sold. For example, here's a nice little bungalow for sale pretty far up the fan in the neighborhood where Art Cook and his automobile were given a quarter-mile ride by the debris flow of 1969. Three bedrooms. A quarter of an acre. How about debris flows?

"Not that I know of," the realtor says. "I've never heard of that happening up there."

House, swimming pool, Jacuzzi, forty yards from Pine Cone Road, $274,500. Could there be a debris problem?

Crescenta Valley Realty: "No. There is not. There is not any problem."

"Why not?"

"It is well maintained."

Pasadena Glen. Two bedrooms, one bath, nine hundred and fifty-two square feet, $129,500. Flood and mud?

Realtor: "There has been in the past—some flooding in the lower areas. But this one is up high. We have to make buyers aware that they are in a special-study zone."

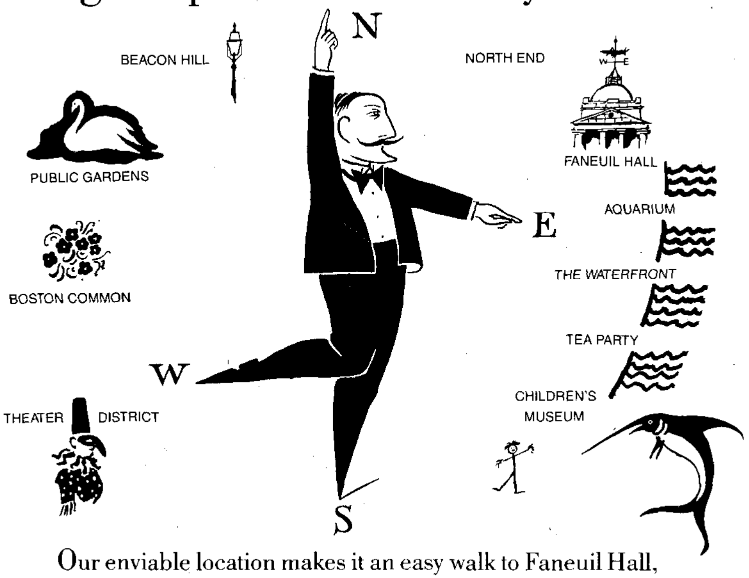
A special-study zone is a place where debris is likely to interrupt the special study, where canyons aim at homes, where insurance rates are high.

New home, built by developer, on one acre, on Ben Lomond Drive, Bradbury. Four bedrooms, four baths, three thousand square feet, $337,500. Flood and mud problems?

Coldwell Banker: "Not to my knowledge. They would have to be disclosed, too. Each listing has a seller's disclosure form, and there's nothing about mudflows on the form."

House on Bubbling Well, Glendora, $167,000. Mud and flood?

Alosta Realty: "No, no. Oh, years and years ago we had a big flood. They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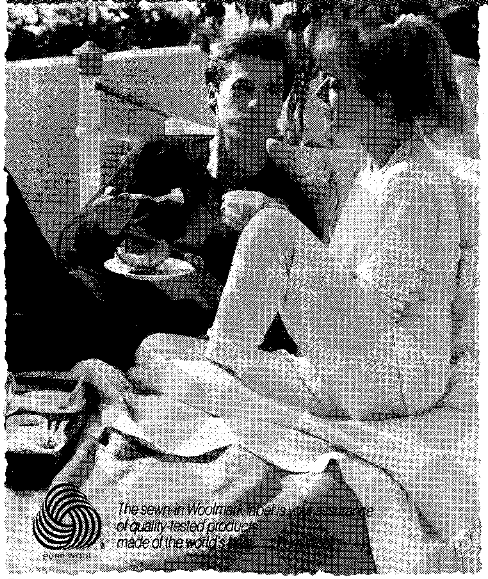

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built that dam, and there's no problem there at all."

Silent Ranch Estates, shake-roofed or tile-covered castles, "individually built," in the four-hundred-thousand-to-one-million-dollar range. Possible debris-flow problems?

Realtor: "There are a couple of houses which I would not touch. The others—I don't think so. I haven't heard anything to that effect. Every house you'd see, we'd have to take that into account."

Terrace View Estates, gated community, all view lots, up to one and a half acres at roughly $135,000 an acre. Debris flows?

"No. We went through the whole winter there. We had some very heavy rains and there were no problems."

New development in a former orange orchard—top of the fan. House for sale: four bedrooms, exercise room, sunken shower, sunken tub, elevator, $1,100,000. Flood and mud?

Realtor: "I have watched this project for over two years. There is no evidence yet of anything. Our company bought three lots there. We would not have invested in these places if there was a problem."

The house across the street has forty-five hundred square feet of living space, not including its three-car garage; a dry gully in the back yard is spanned by a footbridge—$695,000. Although the street is a cul-de-sac, it has evidently been designed as a conduit for more than motor vehicles. The houses beside it are high on built-up banks. Below the turnaround at the bottom is the mouth of a concrete channel, waiting to take in whatever may come. Above the tract, a developer-built debris basin and trash rack call to mind a teacup and tea strainer. The slope rises through live oaks into soft chaparral.

Three-bedroom tri-level, two and a half baths, on two-tenths of an acre in Sunland, just inside the Los Angeles city line. Den, wet bar, pantile roof. $245,000. Mudflow problem?

"I have worked in that area since 1979, and there has not been, to my knowledge, anything large up there."

Flat roof, carport, thick-picket fence, fifth of an acre in Sunland, just inside the Los Angeles city line. Debris?

"Trust me. I have lived many years in hill communities. About ten years ago, there *was* a problem. It had to do with the way they had graded the cemetery."

Six bedrooms, septic tank, three baths, fifth of an acre in Sunland, just inside the Los Angeles city line. Mudflow problem?

"Yes, it's always a problem. Special insurance is necessary."

Two bedrooms, one bath, $91,000, in Sunland, just inside the Los Angeles city line. The house is on Hillrose Street directly below Verdugo Hills Cemetery. Could there possibly be a debris-flow problem?

"No. Not at all."

Four bedrooms, three baths, pool, third of an acre, $239,900, on Hillhaven Avenue, Sunland, just inside the Los Angeles city line. Is there a debris problem?

"If you make an offer, the seller must tell you. A cemetery slid out a couple of years ago."

Other houses, other realtors, same neighborhood:

"I don't know. I don't think they have that problem there."

"There was a problem years ago. They have a channel there now."

"It's always possible, but that place is not on enough of a hill."

"Not that I know of."

"That I don't know. You have to check with the City of Los Angeles."

CARL GUNN came to Los Angeles with his parents in 1916, "when you could drill a hole ninety feet deep and the water would flow out and irrigate your eighty acres." Born in Iowa and made of baling wire, he has been in Glendora fifty years. Like Chuck Colver, he antedates the debris basins and the people they protect. He still lives beyond all defense, far up the bed of a canyon, in what is locally called the elfin forest. His house is small, one-story, with tractors, disk harrows, and other machinery around it, at the base of a slope that rises fifteen hundred feet in half a mile. Retired now, and close by a wood stove, he used to work the Blue Bird Ranch. He leased four hundred and forty acres and raised cattle and lemons. He said, "When I was farming the Blue Bird and we got forty inches, we was tickled to death—cattle running around in grass that was up to their belly. There were some beautiful silt valleys here. Now it's all houses and streets. The old ranchers and farmers are gone. Damn few know the story. They're ewcomers. Ninety per cent of them ever know that the water can go own there like the milltails of Hell. They have no perspective on the posibilities. The people who buy the ouses don't know that sooner or later tuff is going to come down through ere like shit through a tin horn."

Gunn once built himself a crude twooom cabin. It recently changed hands or two hundred and fifty thousand ollars. In the canyon where he lives ow, a loud sound woke him up one vinter morning at six o'clock. It was he sound of errant debris breaking into is house. "Before you could say 'scat,' he water and mud were three feet eep. I didn't hardly believe it. It oesn't bother me. I know that it hapened. If a fire comes, then I worry. wouldn't trade this place for a dozn others, even though you know what an happen. It's the privacy. The coytes. The deer. If it gets where I can't ee off my front porch, I'll move."

Chakib Sambar, who was born in Lebanon and is now the vice-principal f Crescenta Valley High School, has ved against the mountains nearly hirty years. He has seen his share of ebris—especially outside his back oor, where it has built up in considerble volume in a crease called Eagle Canyon. When I called on him one day n early June, he handed me a 3-iron. As we began a short hike into the anyon, he explained that the sheriff ad circulated a rattlesnake alert. "I've ever been out here at this time of ear," he went on. "I only come out in he spring and the fall."

I said, "You call this summer?"

He said, "When it hits a hundred, it's summer."

The canyon was loaded with debris. We walked through pale-yellow yucca. "This is California chaparral," he aid. "When a fire hits this plant, it xplodes. It actually explodes." Samar's son Tod was with us. He did not arry a golf club and was apparently elying on his youthful agility to frusrate the baking serpents. Sambar caried a putter. "We have seen a lot of ires and floods," he said. "The original channel in this canyon was forty eet lower than it is now. This is he beginning of another disaster—a great mass of debris to go out in a storm."

"It seems to be aimed at your house," I said.

"Yes," he said. "It is." And he

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"I believe you've met the Does."

laughed as he added, "My wife is not very thrilled."

"Then why do you live here?"

"Actually, we moved up here because it was the only place we could afford. We bought our house for thirty thousand dollars. It is now worth ten times that."

When the Richter scale is busy, waves form in the Sambar swimming pool. When fires close in, the Sambars have stood on their roof to watch the flames.

"This canyon and this entire mountain were on fire for forty days," he said. "You learn to adapt. You live with it. Fortunately, trouble doesn't come too often. In the years we have been here, we have had only one major earthquake, two major fires, and one major flood."

In Los Angeles, a longtime resident born in Iowa or in Lebanon is something like a royal palm. Neither is native and both are common. Rare, though, is Miner Harkness. He was born in Sierra Madre, and half a century later he still lives there—right up against the hard chaparral, with a watershed behind him that has an average grade of eighty-five per cent and in many places is vertical. This is the country under Mt. Wilson, the roughest segment of the range. Harkness has an insurance brokerage, which is half a mile from his house. On a wall there is an Ansel Adams picture called "Examples." The title refers to huge boulders lying at the foot of mountains.

Harkness likes to go up from town and into the loose rock. "My big love is backpacking and taking day shots out and doing peaks," he said. "I'm not a big-wall rock climber." The remarks were made in his Toyota 4 × 4 while he showed me around the nearby mountains. He was a small, compact man with alert blue eyes and dark brows, an intelligent and kindly face. His hair, generally thinning, was gone in the back, his beard Vandykish and in two shades of gray. We were looking north up Big Santa Anita Canyon—a lovely vista over crisscrossing spurs. On a high mountain face several miles away was a region that appeared to have been bared, and bared again, by the sort of rock avalanche that comes away like a broken tooth and exposes the interior of hundreds of acres of mountain. There were dozens such. The denudation had been caused entirely by human beings, and was the result of the switchbacks in a complexly engineered route built to enable trucks to get around a falls. "It's still eroding," Harkness said. "It's a permanent scar. We call it the Burma Road."

The trucks hauled the concrete bars and other components of some fifty crib structures that were emplaced in tributaries of Big Santa Anita in the early nineteen-sixties. Harkness referred to them as check dams, and explained—as the glaciologist Barclay Kamb had—that they were meant to prevent the streams from downcutting and thus reduce the watersheds' production of debris. Harkness said, "Big Santa Anita Canyon was a wild place with a beautiful trail in it. When they bulldozed that giant road, we thought they were *creating* more debris flow than they could ever hope to stop. With the check dams, they were virtually destroying the canyons. All the natural beauty was being virtually wiped out. I felt that what they were doing was wrong. It was costly to taxpayers, too. We're talking about millions and millions of dollars, wasted. There is absolutely no good reason to put those check dams in. They were doing this in canyon after canyon after canyon."

It was an era when even the newspapers were reflecting the confidence of the county engineers—when, according to one reporter, "stabilizing the steep banks will, once and for all, put an end to erosion."

PROJECT AIMS TO HALT EROSION OF MOUNTAINS

VALLEY AUTHORITIES VOTE LANDSLIDES UNNECESSARY

"Flood Control and the Army Corps of Engineers have lost all perspective as to what they're all about," Harkness said. "The difficult thing is, they get paid, and we—who just live here—don't. If we stop them, they come back a few years later and do it again. They refer to flood control and saving human lives—they push it on that basis—and that's a lot of bullshit. They were going to do Little Santa Anita, cutting roads in six or seven miles. Can you imagine the debris flows that would be caused by *that*?"

The check-damming of Little Santa Anita was stopped by Miner Harkness, Barclay Kamb, Peter Fay, and others, whose organized efforts dissuaded the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. While the battle was going on, a volunteer who spent his evenings knocking on doors to enlist opposition to the check dams spent his days in the mountains as a heavy-equipment operator vigorously making check dams.

"We were not just the Sierra Club raising hell," Harkness said. "I have great respect for the Sierra Club, but I think at times they oppose everything that comes along. I'm not just some nature nut. I've been in the mountains, and I know what the mountains are about."

Harkness has seen three mountain lions—creatures so elusive that a person can spend a lifetime trying to see one. As a kid, he hunted deer with arrows. When the red cars of the electric railway came up to an earlier Sierra Madre, people got off and hiked into the canyons. At night, they sometimes carried tin cans cut through on a slant to hold and reflect lighted candles. They walked up Little Santa Anita Canyon and on to the observatory on Mt. Wilson, climbing four thousand feet holding candles. In the mountains above Sierra Madre lived four Lalone brothers, who trapped coyotes and cut wood. Unsurprisingly, they were often called upon to search for and rescue people whose candles—this way or that—went out. The efforts of the Lalone brothers evolved into a group called Sierra Madre Search & Rescue. The team is twenty-five in number now, and Miner Harkness has been a part of it for thirty-five years.

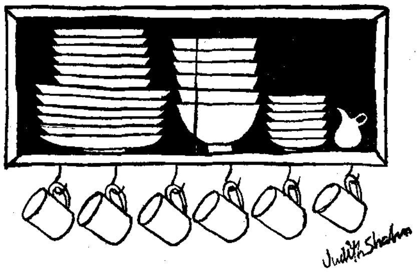
We drove downstream toward the city. Near Big Santa Anita Dam, which was built in 1927 to impound water, he said, "Kids climb the walls of this beautiful canyon. They get scared and freeze. The rock is decomposed granite, which is a climber's nightmare. In the Sierra, the granite would hold a two-ton truck; here it won't even hold my hands pulling down on it. We rappel to the kids. Tie them off. Get a rope and helmet on them, and bring them down."

These were the first people to train bloodhounds for mountain rescue. They were the first to rappel from the air. On a rescue in Bear Canyon, ten miles from home, Harkness was in a helicopter and, in his words, "there was just no place to land," so he stood on the skids and jumped to the ground. That was the impulsive preamble to a rappelling procedure now known as helitak, which is practiced by mountain-rescue teams everywhere in the world.

The members of Sierra Madre Search & Rescue are so skilled and so famous that they have been called to emergencies in, among other places, the Adirondacks, Iowa, and Mexico. Needless to say, they cover the whole of California. Their phone number is on a wall at Yosemite National Park. They conjoin sometimes with the United States Air Force—C-130s with Sierra Madre trucks inside. In the nineteen-seventies, they thought of lowering bloodhounds from choppers in slings, easing them down into the chaparral. The procedure has its limitations. A lot of San Gabriel terrain is much too rugged for dogs.

In Sierra Madre's City Hall, the team has a den they call the Rescue Room. Citations adorn the walls—from the American Red Cross, from El Gobierno del Estado de Baja California, from the Department of State of the United States of America. Hanging from the ceiling is a helicopter's tail rotor bent like a boomerang. A parachute is up there, too. Now that they can rappel from helicopters hovering as much as a hundred and fifty feet off the ground, they no longer have a need for parachutes. The Rescue Room is furnished with seats from a 747.

As a consequence of jumping off helicopters and carrying heavy backpacks, Miner Harkness walks with a very slight limp. On New Year's Day, he rides. When the community of Sierra Madre constructed a Rose Parade float to display the Search & Rescue team, the float was a rolling mountain.



At the upper edge of his home town, we went into Sierra Madre Canyon—a former summer colony, a narrow wash of the Little Santa Anita River. It was something like Pasadena Glen, a couple of miles away, but instead of Gunite streambanks—not to mention the reinforced-concrete box channels prevalent elsewhere—this unaltered wash was full of stream-rounded cobbles and brought to mind villages of the Pyrenees and villages of the Massif Central. "Some houses in this canyon you walk up a trail to get to," Harkness said. Most were extremely close to the wash and to each other. There was a covered bridge over the wash. At the head of the street was Sierra Madre Dam, larger than an ordinary debris basin but modest as a dam. Harkness said he had seen logs three feet in diameter shooting over the spillway like canoes. Los Angeles County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had proposed expanding the dam and building crib structures far up the canyon the better to arrest the debris. "They spoke of major fires, of the hundred-year flood. It's always the same tactics. But the people of Sierra Madre said, 'Buzz off!' We said, 'Hey! We love our canyon as it is. We'll take the risk.' They used constant scare tactics, saying that the dam was cracked, and so forth. Then they said, 'If you people don't accept our recommendations, you people are going to be legally liable for the City of Arcadia.' " Arcadia lies below Sierra Madre, at the bottom of the fan.

"They go into some town and the people are sold this bill of goods," Miner Harkness went on. "The next thing you know, it's done, and the people say, 'Jesus Christ! What happened to our canyon?' That will not happen in Sierra Madre. The people love the canyon, and they get up in arms. In Sierra Madre when there's a fire, the whole town comes up to the mountain frontier to stand on roofs and soak them down. That is the spirit that keeps the Flood Control people and the Army Corps of Engineers from tearing this canyon to shreds."

He took me up to high ground, where we looked out into a fading haze at a large part of Los Angeles. The fan, below us, was a paisley of swimming pools. There were million-dollar houses on some truncated hills. Harkness said, "People who come up here and knock off the tops of these mountains—if they get wiped out in a debris flow or a forest fire, that is the price they pay for the view. The county or the state should not have to foot any of that. In a person's tax bill, though, a high percentage of the total is for flood control. That's wrong. Living there is a risk people should be willing to take. A major brushfire declared a national disaster! That's b.s.! I know the risk in building a house there. You build there or buy there because you want to be there. Other people shouldn't be required to pay for my risk."

One February morning years ago, Miner Harkness stopped downtown for a quick cup of coffee before flying a mission in a Los Angeles County helicopter. Some firemen were drinking coffee, too. A fireman's pager sounded. A debris flow had mobilized, and people were trapped.

Harkness felt "a real cold chill." Of the several dozen most vulnerable houses in Sierra Madre, his was one. He went home immediately. All around the place, red lights were flashing.

His house had been torn in two, with his wife, Sara, in it, and their infant daughter, and their five-year-old twin sons, another daughter, and Joanne Crowder, a next-door neighbor. In a small canyon above, a large amount of debris had bulked up through time. The construction of a fire road had contributed to the volume. As people so often do, Harkness compared it to a loaded gun. Sara and the baby were in the master bedroom. When the slug of mud and boulders came out of the mountain crease, Joanne Crowder, who had fled to the Harkness house, was caught by the entering debris. It broke her back and a collarbone. The Harknesses' hot-water heater was flung upon her, and the water scalded her legs to the third degree.

The Harkness house projected from the hillside and had a carport beneath the master bedroom. The debris tore off the master bedroom with Sara and the baby inside. The bedroom fell on the family station wagon. With the bedroom on top of it, the station wagon went down the driveway and on down the street. In what remained of the house, the twins and their sister Claudine were unhurt. Sara and the baby came to the end of their ride unhurt. The station wagon suffered considerably. When the bedroom was taken off it, the car was twenty-six inches high.

The living room had been knocked four feet askew but had not collapsed. A bathtub was ripped nearly in half. Almost surely, the master bedroom would have broken into pieces if it had not fallen on the station wagon and been carried away intact. Furniture and jewelry were all over the hill—"heirlooms everywhere, but there was no looting; no one took a thing."

The baby, Andrea, slept on her father's chest for six months after the event. She still gets nervous in a lightning storm.

Naturally, I asked Miner Harkness if he had contemplated moving away.

The look that came into his face suggested that he was confronting a strange, unprecedented question. He said, "It never entered my mind." He remembered Sierra Madre when it was an isolated town. He had seen the subdivisions change the country where he hunted as a boy. He had built his house as close as he could to his predilected mountains. It was on Churchill Road off Mountain Trail, just west of Sierra Madre Canyon, on a site where there had once been a hunting lodge—for the people from Los Angeles who came up to Sierra Madre on the railway with the red cars. Miner and Sara Harkness (an intensive-care nurse) were not about to move away. Their destroyed house was uninsured. Inspection showed that not much could be kept but a small block wall. Engineers who looked over the site told the Harknesses not to rebuild. When Miner made clear to them that such advice would go unheeded, they suggested a monumental retaining wall—a sort of one-family check dam—to try to stabilize future debris.

Building a check dam was not his style. "The heavy equipment would tear up the canyon," he said. His solution was a house enlofted. It stands in the air, on sixteen concrete pylons, each fifty-seven inches around. The pylons go down into the earth more than ten feet. Inside them are bundles of reinforcing rods wrapped in sheaths of steel.

The house itself is sheathed in cedar, and has an outside stairway of rough-hewn planks. Its windows are large and without curtains, which are not needed among the evergreen oaks. When the city emerges from beneath its veils, nothing impedes the view.

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The place has the aspect of a lookout tower positioned on the front—a post of observation in the cycle of fire and rain. Seven times, Miner Harkness and his family have been ordered to evacuate their house because of the threat of fire. And after the fires the dry ravel has built new depths of debris. Harkness clearly sees himself as an indigenous part of the cycle. Sitting on one of his rough planks, he said, "When the Santa Ana winds blow, and a big fire gets under way, you're not going to be able to hold it if it ever comes through here. That is a risk you take."

IF Los Angeles hangs on long enough, it will cart the mountains entirely away, but already it is having difficulty figuring out where to put them. In a productive season, the debris basins will catch more than a million cubic yards. The reservoirs back in the mountains take in much more than that. Over-all cleanout costs can exceed sixty million dollars in a single year—a required expenditure if the system is to function.

The Los Angeles side of this battle is unexampled in heroic chutzpah—to a degree expressible in the volume of any fan. For a brief geologic time, debris has been pouring out of Little Santa Anita Canyon, for example, and piling up on the plain. Among the San Gabriels' alluvial fans, this is a modest one in all respects. Its toe is down at the horse track—Santa Anita—and its slope begins to rise through the Los Angeles Arboretum and then goes on rising a couple of miles, through the center of Sierra Madre and on up Baldwin Avenue to Carter Debris Basin, at the mountain front. The fan coalesces with fans on either side, but its width can be approximated at a mile and a half. Calculation shows that this one minor fan consists of about two billion cubic yards of material that has so far come off the watersheds above. Toward the middle of the twentieth century, Los Angeles undertook to replace nature as the depositor of material. Los Angeles assumed responsibility as well for at least fifty other fans on the San Gabriel front, not to mention lesser uplifts, like the Santa Monica Mountains and the Verdugo Hills.

Against the prodigious odds, Los Angeles is much more successful than it may appear to be when neighborhoods buried to the rooflines are pictured in the *Times*. To date, the debris basins have trapped twenty million tons of mountain. A small fraction of that figure has managed to get beyond them. Since the basins can fill up in a few hours, equipment has to be marshalled very swiftly to make cleanouts —and sometimes repeated cleanouts where more debris is expected. At the height of a storm, radio patrols are all over the front feeding information into the computers of the Storm Operation Center, which deploys forces from six field yards—deploys the motor graders, the backhoes, the front-end loaders, the trailer-mounted night-construction floodlight systems, the thirty-five-ton truck-mounted clamshell cranes, the forty-five-ton draglines with six-yard buckets, the six-inch pumps that can suck in and spit out rocks, the rock grapples that can pick up five-ton boulders, and, above all, the big ten-wheelers: dump trucks capable of hauling fifteen tons at a time.

Los Angeles owns some of this equipment, but Los Angeles is not an OPEC country. Los Angeles cannot afford to keep hundreds of dump trucks waiting for an annual or biennial storm. The debris is made attractive to private truckers. They are paid fifty dollars an hour for lugging mud, no overtime. Flood has used as many as three hundred private trucks in one storm. They come from all over Southern California—from Lone Pine in the Owens Valley, from San Diego. Forty trucks once came from Redding, nearly five hundred miles north, and found no work when they arrived. A call once came to the section from a heavy-equipment operator in the Midwest. He wanted the work for his cranes and large loaders, and was willing to send them two thousand miles.

Wherever there has been an antecedent fire, debris basins are likely to fill to the brim. In 1978, every basin filled for fifteen miles under the slopes burned by the Mill Fire—eighteen basins in all. In some of them, the rocks were so big that they had to be broken by dynamite before they could be removed. Dunsmuir was cleaned twice that winter, Mullally and Denivelle three times. They filled as they were being emptied. Zachau was cleaned out three times as well, but it still let boulders ten feet in diameter get away. People living below Zachau sued (unsuccessfully), claiming that the county had not maintained the basin. "We had records that showed if there was two

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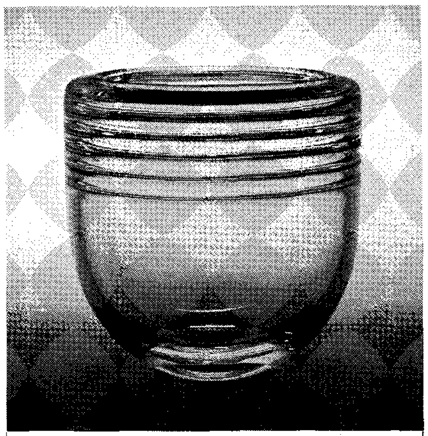

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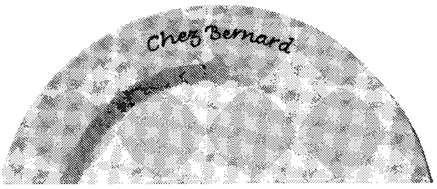

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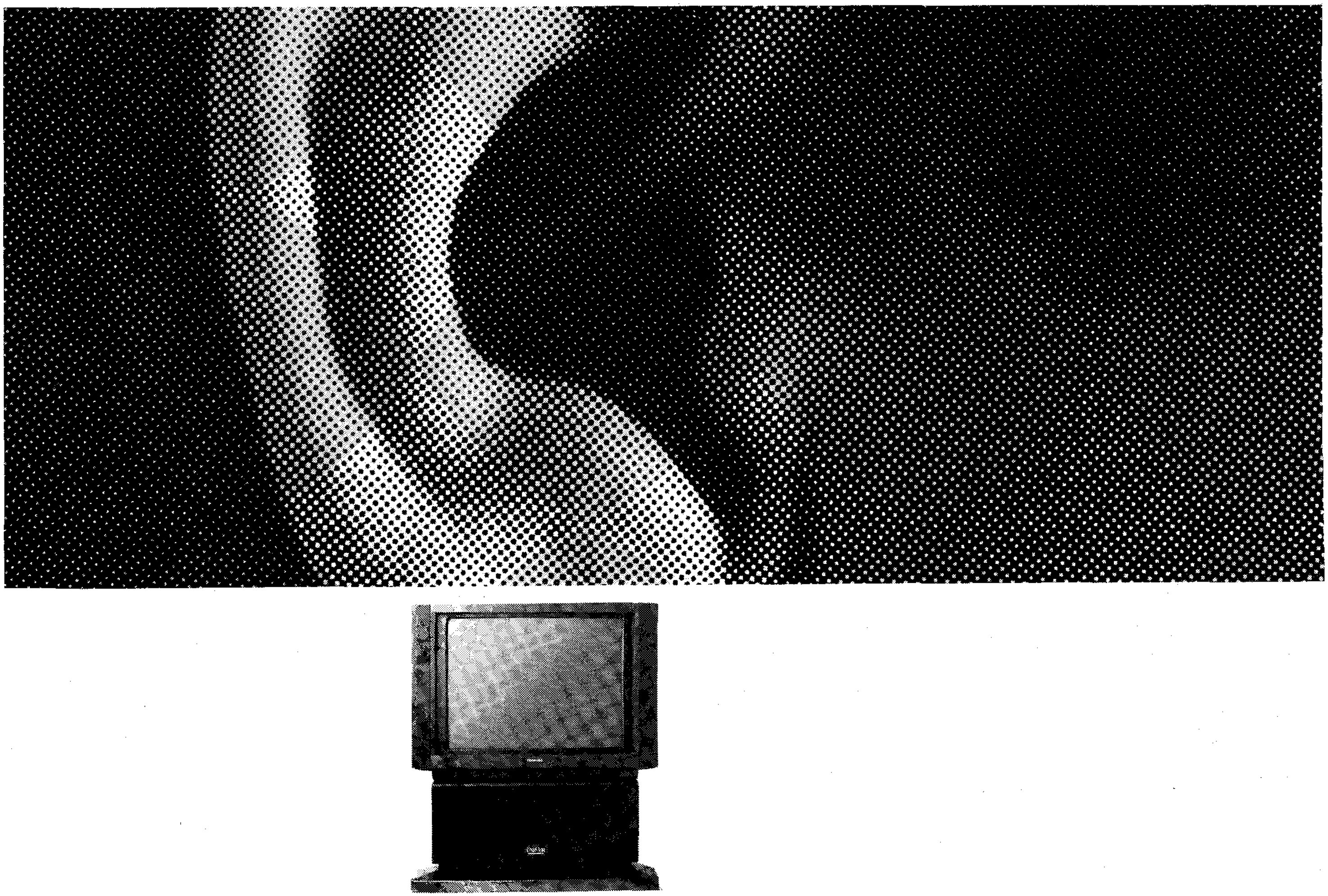
ounces of dirt in it we took it out," Dan Davis says, his indignation unmitigated.

Before the creation of the debris basins, mountain sands were carried to the ocean by winter floods. Now there is a beach problem. Sand is being lost to offshore canyons and is not being naturally replenished. A place that values its beaches as much as Southern California does has no choice but to buy sand. Sand has been transported by ten-wheelers from the mountains to the beaches. When thirty thousand yards of sand was put on Zuma Beach, people complained about the color contrast. Materials cleaned out of the Laurel Ridge Debris Basin, in the Santa Monica Mountains, used to be hauled over the mountains in a direction away from the ocean and dropped at the Calabasas dump. Subsequent Laurel cleanouts went onto the beach. The Sedimentation Section has been investigating the possibility of using pipeline slurries to transport debris to distant gravel pits; it could also go in pipelines to the beach. Vito Vanoni said, "I think the day will come when we grind it all up and send it to the beach. The question is: Where do we get the water for the slurry? We could use sewage. That's not so good. Possibly we could use salt water."

Years ago, in an act of lyric irony, Flood Control bought four cloud-seeding generators and set them up near reservoirs in the mountains and along the front. The cloud-seeding generators have been used almost exclusively during foul winter weather, since they would not be efficacious under the otherwise azure sky. The department is criticized for seeding clouds. On the other hand, letters appear in the *Times* attacking the department when it does *not* seed clouds. The generators shoot incoming weather fronts with microscopic crystals of silver iodide. This is known as "enhancing the storm." The storm is worth at least a hundred dollars an acre-foot. Los Angeles wants the water so much that it mines the storm. This requires artful judgment. The idea is to increase the volume of rain, but not to the point of mobilizing debris flows. The cloud-seeding generators were running on February 7, 1978, for example, and they ran on February 8th and February 9th, but they were shut down when the proportions of the storm became apparent. The events on Pine Cone Road and at Hidden Springs and in the Verdugo Hills Cemetery, among others, occurred in the first hours of February 10th. The seeding could not have added anything much to the total rainfall, but the fact remains that during the wettest week of the rainiest season of the twentieth century the cloud-seeding generators were enhancing the storm. Cheeky is the warrior who goes behind the lines to pick the enemy's pockets on the eve of battle.

In 1980, when John Tettemer was Acting Chief Deputy Engineer at Flood, he remarked at a symposium, "The war stories we tell each other are almost exclusively related to debris problems. . . . We are all getting blitzed after fires by small canyons. . . . Funny things are occurring in small debris basins. I cannot tell you exactly what. All I know is that during major storms debris sometimes goes over the spillway when the basin is not really full. We do not understand the dynamics, but it seems that these small basins act more like flip buckets than



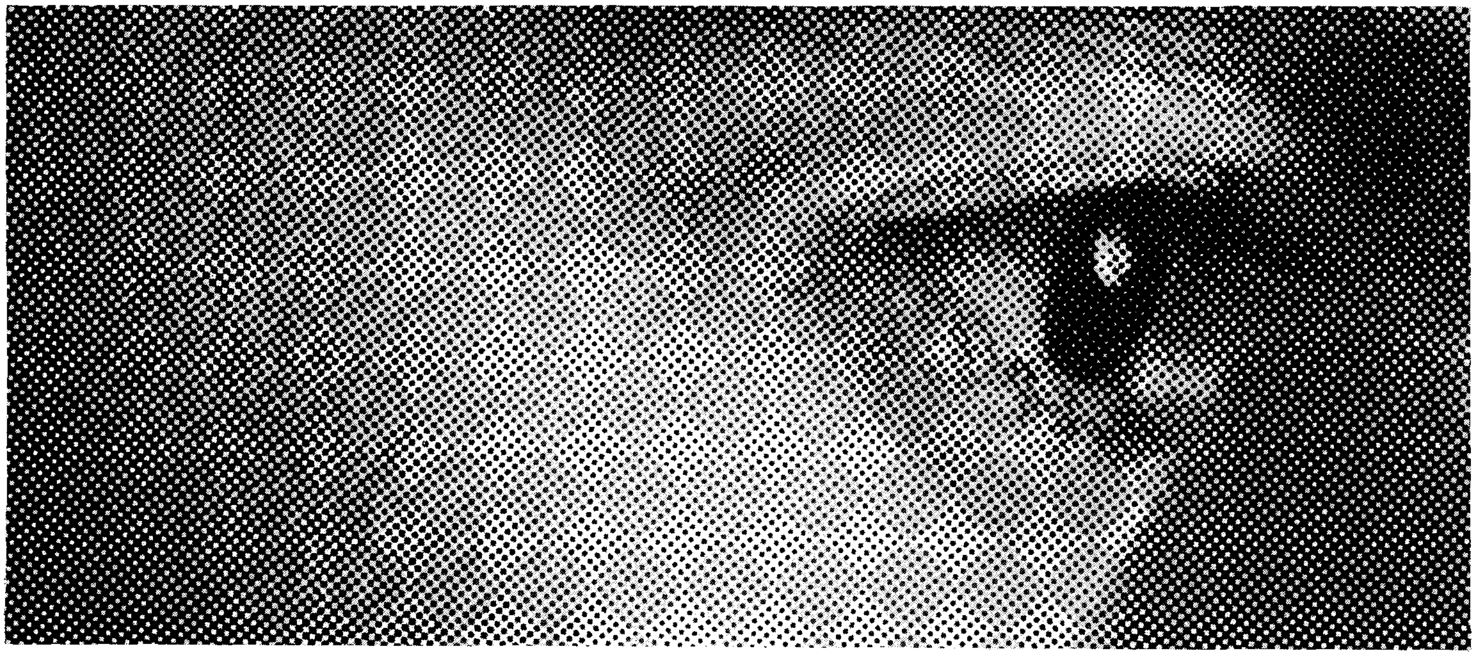
lakes. . . . We and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expected our channels to last maybe a hundred years. We have seen cases where the reinforcing steel was exposed in one storm. . . . We do not know enough. . . . We also find communities starting to wonder why their high-priced facilities fail during storms when they are needed. I do not blame them, do you? . . . We should stop building things where they do not belong, and leave some room for nature." To which his colleague Arthur Bruington added, "Through the district, the residents are battling, but sediment is still winning. . . . Managing the sediment capable of being produced by the San Gabriel Mountains is important to the safety of the residents of the district, but, frankly, it is like trying to hold back the storm tides of the ocean."

After one season, twelve million cubic yards were removed from four of the mountain reservoirs. After one season, a million two hundred thousand yards were taken out of the debris basins. In Santa Fe Basin, the huge trap in the San Gabriel River where it meets the Los Angeles plain, the Army Corps of Engineers has fifteen million yards it wants to get rid of, but where? Disposal sites have become extremely hard to find. Every abandoned gravel pit between Tujunga and Twentynine Palms has already been filled with the rock of the transverse mountains, or so it seems. Chuck Colver, of Covina, who watched his orchards go down and his neighbors come up, has been around long enough to see a likely solution to the problem. "One of these days," he predicts, "they'll be buying tracts of houses to get a place to deposit the material."

Donald Nichols, of the Department of Public Works, pointed out to me one day that the word "debris" suggests sanitary landfill and odor, so debris-disposal sites are now called "sediment-placement sites" in order to get communities to accept them. "To have to stroke our folks like that kind of insults me, frankly," he said. "But disposal is a real dilemma. The Sierra Club says, 'If you put it here, you'll kill a lizard.' The Forest Service and Fish and Game also complain. Acquisition of debris-disposal areas is much slower today because of the California Environmental Quality Act. When we try to establish a new disposal area, we run into opposition from homeowners and environmentalists. The environmentalists run the gamut from the sensible ones to the crazies. They say, 'You'll kill what you put it on. You'll dislocate animals. You'll alter the land form.' That's correct. But when we're finished we'll plant vegetation. The animals will come back. The rest we have to leave to the Big Guy in the Sky, who will finally naturalize these deposits we make."

The Big Guy doesn't always do a perfect job. In Laguna Canyon years ago, some forty houses were built on old disposed debris. In 1978, the fill failed. The forty houses—worth two hundred and fifty to five hundred thousand dollars each—slid downhill like sleds.

Inevitably, someone was inspired to put the rock back up in the mountains. This elegant absurdity may be the ne plus ultra in telling the Big Guy who's in charge. San Gabriel Dam, a few miles upriver from Azusa, was built in the late nineteen-thirties to keep debris from clogging a reservoir just below



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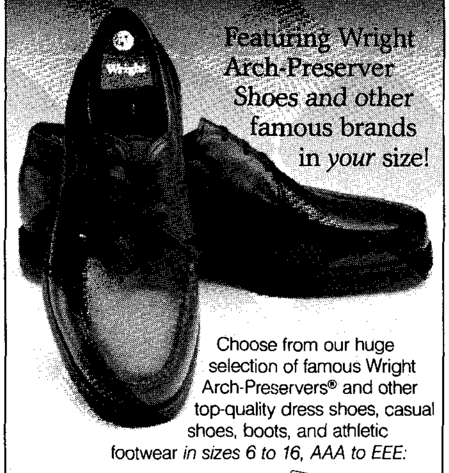

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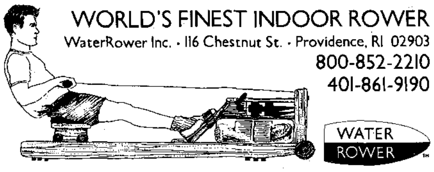

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it. More than twelve million tons of debris have been stopped behind San Gabriel Dam in one rainy season. San Gabriel catches so much mountain that it has to be more or less continuously cleaned out. Fifty or sixty trucks have lined up to lug the debris away. One place they have put it is in the tributary Burro Canyon, a haul of less than a mile, and—in elevation—six hundred feet up. "That way the engineers can have job security," Wade Wells once said to me. "They take the debris and carry it back into the mountains, where they create a potential debris flow."

"Burro will someday serve as a campground," Don Nichols said. "We have improved on nature by putting a mountain up there that doesn't come back down. Burro has debris basins in it. It has *its own* debris basins. We put fourteen million cubic yards in Burro Canyon."

Wells and I went up there one day to see this epic artifact—in clear dry air and vast silence—eight miles from Arby's. A California quail ran by, sporting its knightlike plume. In the V-shaped mountain valley, the deposit rested like an aircraft carrier in drydock—a comparison that would be more apt if aircraft carriers were not so small. Debris basins were along its upper flank, there to *protect* the man-made deposit. Burro Creek passed under it, through a deep culvert a mile long. For twenty million dollars, Los Angeles had returned the rock to the mountains. For twenty million dollars, they had built in Burro Canyon an edifice ten times as large as the largest pyramid at Giza. —JOHN MCPHEE

(*This is the second part of a two-part article.*)

•

NON-STOP SENTENCE DERBY

[*Henry Allen in the Washington Post*]

Garry Trudeau, who does the "Doonesbury" comic strip, has a face like a shutter on an automatic-focus camera, always adjusting, focusing, opening and closing, the sort of soft, wary face that makes you wonder if he might stutter, the face of a first-class flipper man on the great pinball machine of American irony, a face that is trusting but bewildered at the same time, like a bird watcher lost in a swamp, the easy-to-underestimate face of a lot of cartoonists, which is to say almost perversely juvenile, anarchic actually, an apostle of the giggles of upper-middle-class self-loathing, the perfect face to bring to a Democratic convention, given the last two decades of history and, as it happens, of "Doonesbury."

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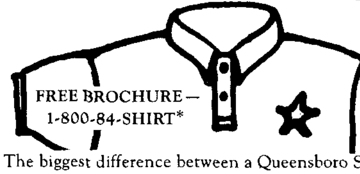

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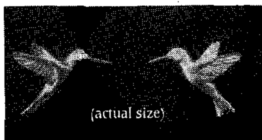

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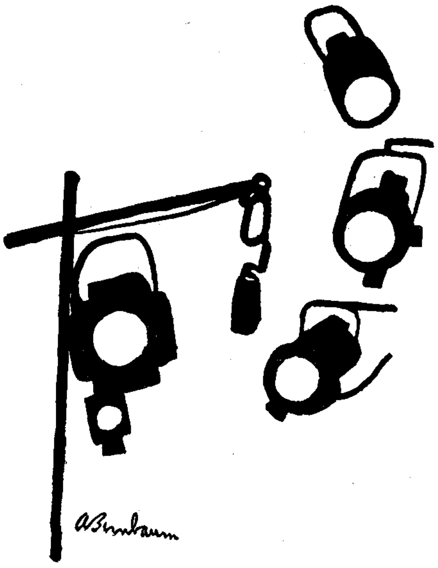
Winners

THE annual Young Playwrights Festival is always a joyful occasion, and the seventh edition, which opened last week at Playwrights Horizons and will run there through October 8th, is hands down the best. The three winners to be given full productions are comedies with an underlying seriousness, and are by writers who are still in their teens. Unlike a lot of what one sees in movies or on television, the plays, one-acters, seem to be based on first-hand observation or invention of people, not pictures of people. Here is no evening of "images;" the word is the thing, and the words are good. "And the Air Didn't Answer," by Robert Kerr (aged seventeen when the play was submitted), is about a Catholic teen-ager, Dan Wilson, whom we first see standing at a lectern working on a speech about faith. His girlfriend, Jennifer, standing beside him, suggests that perhaps a bit more conviction or sincerity might bolster his delivery, and he admits that he doesn't know what faith means, or even God, for that matter. At confession, the priest, to whom loss of faith is all in a day's work, puts the blame on lack of self-discipline, and tells him to forgo one dinner and one night's sleep. The night is sleepless but not dreamless, and a couple of crusaders appear to keep him company. They are the forerunners of many hallucinatory characters who intrude at intervals. Unable to keep awake at school the next day, he draws detention, and meets another detainee, Renee, a free spirit, open to every religious fad and sympathetic to his loss. The play is made up of many short episodes—with Dan's worried mother, who may have bought him the wrong Bible when he was a child, with pious Jennifer, with free-soul Renee, and with, among other revenants, Virgil, who conducts a guided tour through Dante's Inferno. All the episodes are funny, with a sharp satiric barb in many of them, and the ending, with God and faith as out of reach as ever, is neatly inconclusive. The acting is good, under the direction of Christopher Durang (who else?). Robert Sean Leonard is fine as Dan, and he is particularly well supported by Debra Monk as the mother, Richard Council as the priest, and Erica Gimpel as Renee. Morgan Jenness was Mr. Kerr's literary adviser.

THE brief, amusing "Seniority," by Eric Ziegenhagen (aged sixteen when the play was submitted), opens with a young girl, Debbie, sitting restlessly on a couch. The time is midnight, and she is waiting up for her sister Fiona, who is out on a date. Debbie is a high-school senior, Fiona a freshman, and when Fiona gets home the conversation is all about dating, with Debbie trying not to seem nosy and Fiona defensive. When Debbie eventually learns that the date was one Ian, a fellow-senior whom she is longing to go out with but far too timid to invite, she is both crushed and indignant. But Fiona is bold—"the only way," she asserts. She did the asking. After Fiona goes up to bed, Ian knocks at the door and comes in with Fiona's purse, which she left in his car. Debbie stops him (temporarily) on his way to Fiona's room, and in a short scene admits her own attraction. Ian, in the person of Jihmi Kennedy, handles this difficult situation with poise and tact and considerable sensitivity; Bellina Logan and Allison Dean, as the sisters, do well, too. Lisa Peterson directed, and Alfred Uhry was the adviser.

AT the beginning of "Women and Wallace," by Jonathan Marc Sherman (aged eighteen at submission), a handsome young man throws a tomato at a pretty young woman; it explodes all over her white dress. "I love you," he says. The young man is, of course, Wallace. We next see him at the edge of the stage. He tells the audience that he is six years old and he loves his mommy, who washes his clothes and makes sandwiches for his school lunch. As he speaks, his mother stands on a platform above him, knife in hand, spreading a sandwich; she then cuts her throat. The child finds her body on the kitchen floor. The play packs considerable substance, to say nothing of emotion and humor, into one act. The rest of the action is a series of encounters between Wallace, haunted by the suicide and unable to break the spell, and the various women he sees, in one capacity or another, through the years, until he turns eighteen. Mr. Sherman manages to make many of these scenes very funny (without breaking the spell); it is almost impossible to believe that he is a beginner. Two of the best scenes are with Wallace's grandmother (given a remarkable performance by Joan Copeland), but there are other good ones—with a little girl who swipes his sandwich, with his psychiatrist, and with a number of girls who become his friends. Throughout, these people sit in a circle around the platform, when they are not at work, and most of the time the mother sits in a corner, at stage right, never taking her eyes off Wallace. Finally, she surrenders her chair to the young woman he falls in love with. Under the deft direction of Don Scardino, the performance is a perfect match for the play. Josh Hamilton is splendid as Wallace, and I also admired Miss Monk as the psychiatrist, Mary Joy as the (silent) mother, and Dana Behr, Joanna Going, and Miss Gimpel. The settings, by Allen Moyer, are sparse, and all the more dramatic for that. Albert Innaurato was Mr. Sherman's adviser; lucky Mr. Sherman.

—EDITH OLIVER



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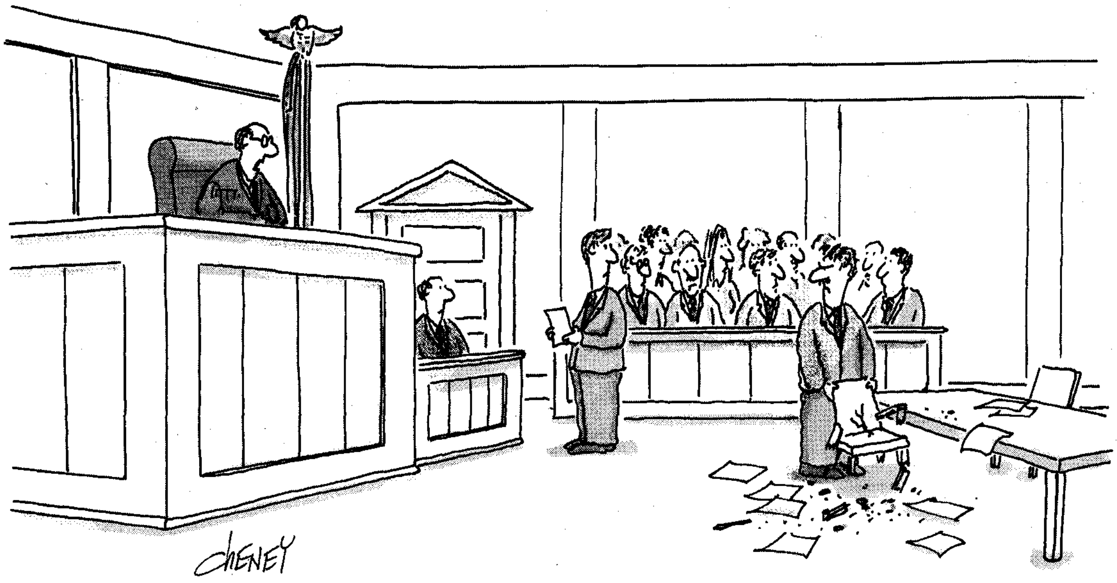
THE CURRENT CINEMA

Secret Sharers

DAVID CRONENBERG's "Dead Ringers" is a psychological drama that feels like a horror movie. It tells a lurid story with chilling, clinical austerity. We come out clammy, shaken, a little numb, as if from a particularly upsetting visit to the doctor: Cronenberg palpates us all over, probes us with latex gloves, and then won't tell us what we've got. "Dead Ringers" is about identical twins, Beverly and Elliot Mantle (both played by Jeremy Irons), who become gynecologists and run a very successful fertility clinic together. Although their personalities are distinct—Beverly is introspective and scholarly, Elliot is outgoing and rather callous—they have shared everything about their lives since childhood: they live together, practice medicine together, and sleep with the same women. They have an almost mystical sense of their emotional and physical bond: in Beverly's dreams, he and his brother are joined like Siamese twins; Elliot says, "Whatever is in his bloodstream goes directly into mine." The Mantle twins are a worst-case version of the possibilities of human intimacy, a frighteningly self-contained domestic unit. And the Mantles' world becomes more bizarre and hermetic and off-putting as the story progresses; by the end, when the doctors have retreated together into the muffled, remote consciousness of drug addicts, we have nothing to watch except the twins stumbling morosely through overlit, debris-filled rooms. The world outside barely exists for them, or for us—as if the doctors, having fed off the world like vampires, had finally drained it dry. "Dead Ringers" is a horrible story about a freakish case, and it probably shouldn't get to us. But somehow it does.

Cronenberg, most of whose previous work has been in the horror genre ("The Brood," "Videodrome," "The Dead Zone," and the 1986 incarnation of "The Fly"), has always been attracted to repellent material, and he knows what to do with it, how to keep us transfixed by things we'd rather turn away from. The secret of horror movies is subtext—metaphors that attack like viruses and produce a fever of associations in our minds. (Cronenberg's first feature was called "They Came from Within.") The character played by Jeff Goldblum in "The Fly," suffering the degenerative effects of having had his genetic material scrambled with a fly's, seems by the end of the film to be dying of a randomly metastasizing suggestiveness: his condition first evokes the false euphoria of the drug addict, then the middle-of-the-night terror of the cancer patient, and, finally, the hopelessness and need of the AIDS victim. That movie's most powerful scenes are the ones in which Goldblum looks in his mirror and examines what's happening to him. There are few scenes in movies more unbearable than the one in which he staggers away from the mirror, sits on the edge of the tub, and says to himself, "Am I dying?" He's more alone right then than any of Bergman's island neurotics discovering that God has abandoned them in the universe; we're never more isolated than we are at the moment when symptoms appear, when the body first reveals to us its treachery, in the sealed-off cell of a bathroom. This is subtext with a vengeance. It's an overdose: it turns us in on ourselves.

"Dead Ringers" is a relentless, excruciating elaboration of the mirror-gazing motif in "The Fly." The Mantles look at the world and see only each other; they're dying of self-reflection, a genetically enforced insularity, a narcissism they're helpless to transcend. There's a weird innocence about their relationship to reality. We see them first as children, discussing the mysteries of sex in a detached, solemn way and then approaching a neighborhood girl with a blunt proposition; they might almost be applying for a research grant. (She turns them down, none too gently.) In medical school, they distinguish themselves by inventing a sinister-looking surgical instrument, the Mantle Retractor. This alarming tool becomes, in the course of the movie, a kind of metaphor for the way the twins probe and manipulate the world: they have a profoundly alienated, mechanical perspective, even as fertility specialists examining women's bodies to facilitate the creation of life. When, late in the movie, Bev withdraws into barbiturate-induced reverie, he comforts himself by fondling a gold-plated model of the Retractor; at the height of his madness, he has a special set of grotesquely primitive obstetric instruments made up and actually attempts to use them on an anesthetized woman. In one sense, this movie is an unsettling satiric confirmation of patients' fears about arrogant, egotistical doctors—our suspi-



"Objection sustained."

cion that we aren't quite real for them, that while we're being examined or operated on our bodies might as well be inert matter, anatomical dolls. When, in one gruesomely comic scene, a helpless patient complains to Bev that he's hurting her, and he simply carries on with the procedure, berating her furiously ("*This* hurts? It couldn't possibly hurt"), it's everyone's nightmare of being at the mercy of a sadistic doctor.

At this point, the twins' attitude toward the world—in the form of the women who pass through their clinic—is purely delusional. Wielding the Retractor, Bev claims, "There's nothing wrong with the instrument. It's the body. The woman's body was all wrong." He says, "The patients are getting strange. . . . Their insides are deformed." He's clearly out of his mind now, but this insanity is only a late, rampant stage of a lifelong disease—the manifestation of the twins' congenital inability to connect to anything or anyone but each other. Their insensitivity to their patients and the need to mediate with technology their experience of women are extensions of the eerily clinical tone of the childhood attempt at seduction.

The movie has a powerful erotic subtext, which may be the most disturbing thing about it. When we first see the twins as adults—after the brief sequences of childhood and medical school—they seem to approach sex as one of the perks of their gynecological practice. It's part of the child's game they're playing with the world. They select a likely woman from among their patients and each sleeps with her in turn, as if they were consulting on a diagnosis; she never has to know that she's making love to two different men. The woman who breaks the pattern is an actress named Claire Niveau (Geneviève Bujold). Beverly examines her, Elliot—impersonating his brother—goes to bed with her first, but Beverly begins to fall in love with her and to want to keep her for himself. Initially, this seems positive, the expression of one twin's impulse to establish some sort of real emotional link to the world outside. Of course, the attempt is doomed, and not just because Elliot is jealous. The nature of the attraction between Claire and Beverly is, from the very beginning, more than a little perverse. He seems to be drawn to her at least in part because she's a biological anomaly: she has a uterus with three chambers, and in his eyes that makes her unique. (During one examination, he jokes with her about "beauty contests for the insides of bodies.") She's attracted to him, in a masochistic way, because he's a witness to the inadequacy of her body; her triple-chambered uterus makes her incapable of bearing children, and she hates herself for her incapacity. The first time she and Bev make love, he ties her to the bed with surgical tubing and clamps; this is an *extremely* kinky doctor-patient relationship. Bev desperately wants to be in love with her, but nothing in his experience has prepared him for it. When they're separated, by Claire's commitment to shoot a film on location, he goes through a traumatic withdrawal: he can't bear to tear himself away from her. Catastrophically, he calls her at her hotel and a man answers the phone. It's only her assistant (who is, besides, obviously gay), but Bev, as possessive as an infant, is convinced that she has betrayed him; he vents his fury on the assistant by reciting detailed instructions about how to give Claire a gynecological examination. (This is the same plot device that triggers the hero's downfall in "The Fly": in each case, a self-absorbed, inexperienced lover is driven to self-destruction by the mere suggestion that his beloved could be unfaithful to him.)

Once Beverly has begun his downward slide, his horrified retreat from his one tentative foray into the world of other people, Jeremy Irons has to carry the movie. His performance needs to be a technical tour de force, and it is; but it's more than that. Irons complicates this movie's already intricate resonances by allowing himself to be buffoonishly pathetic: bulging eyes and limp, boneless gestures make him a nightmarish cartoon of decadence. His face seems to be aging into one of those disquieting masks of ruined beauty, like Dirk Bogarde's or Gig Young's, and his skin has a ghastly pallor: the Mantle twins, cocooned in their apart-

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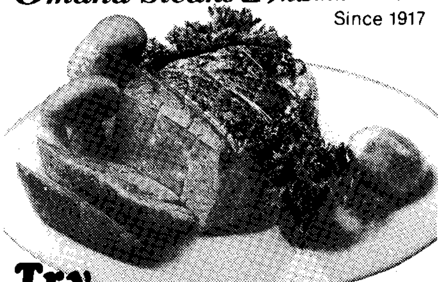

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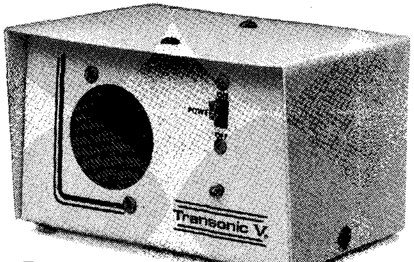

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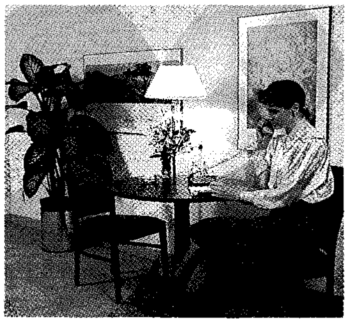

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ment, look as if they'd never seen th sun—almost as if they'd never bee born.

Cronenberg's concentration is extraordinary. Even when nothing seem to be happening, "Dead Ringers" has scarily focussed intensity that keeps u watching. The script, by the directo and Norman Snider, is very loosel based on a bad novel called "Twins, by Bari Wood and Jack Geasland which was itself inspired by the real-life story of the Marcus twins, Nev York gynecologists who were foun dead together in an East Side apartment in 1975. The script is an improvement both on the novel and o reality. It's a model of construction, complex and perfectly balanced instrument of unease. Everything work with everything else, and everythin penetrates until it hurts. The movi is beautifully thought out in visua terms, too. The medical scenes ar dimly lit, the surgeons wear blood-re gowns, and we can never quite mak out what's going on. But the twins apartment—their womb—is garishl bright, starkly furnished; there we se every detail, as if we were lookin through one of those uncomfortabl optical devices that doctors use whe they want to see deep inside us. A always, Cronenberg's work gleam with intelligence, and goes as far as i can go. Yet there's something suspec about his imagination. In "Dea Ringers" the *Weekly World News* material and the subtexts of sexual perversity and biological paranoia ar deployed with an almost unnatura cunning: Cronenberg hits our sensitiv spots with a disturbingly practice touch. This movie about narcissisn keeps turning further and further inward—the twins' story is one of helpless regression—and it makes us do th same. By the time it's over, we feel as i we, too, were huddled in a mirror world, hemmed in by images of ou own fears and inadequacies, and sensing our vulnerability to everything outside the smooth circle of reflection Cronenberg stirs up emotions that ar so threatening, so overpowering, tha we can respond only by withdrawin —by alienating ourselves in any wa we can. He shines a bright, cold ligh on inoperable terrors inside us and ther leaves us staring, with blurred incomprehension, at the instruments in his clinic's pristine cabinets.

—TERRENCE RAFFERTY

THE ART WORLD

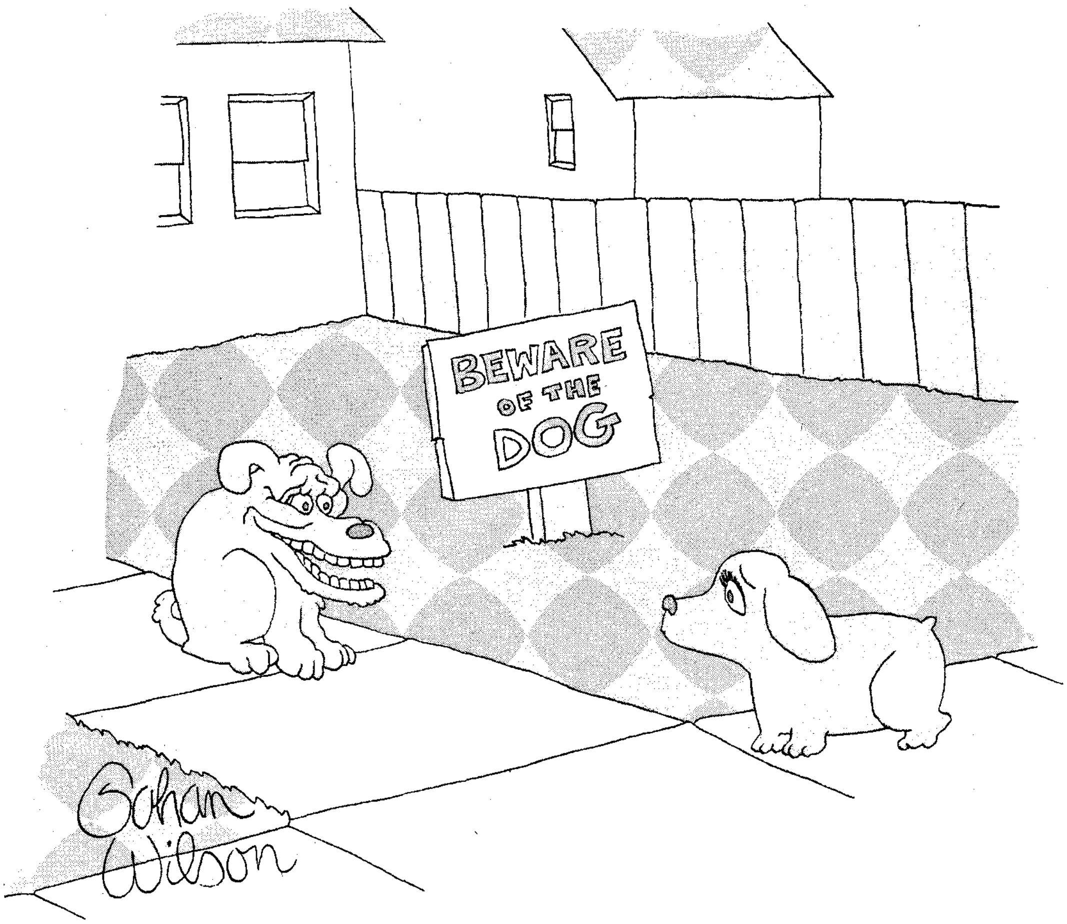
Cyclops

BY the time of his death, in 1980, the painter Philip Guston had become a Lear-like figure in American art. Guston was born in 1913, and belonged to the generation of American painters who invented Abstract Expressionism. But he found his style and fame a few years after Kline and Pollock and de Kooning had found theirs. For a long time, that seemed part of his good luck. He belonged to the fifties, not to the forties—to a time when the fight for abstraction had been won and American abstract painting could begin to become placid and luxurious, and even a little complacent. Guston was a slow-motion Action painter, with a hesitant, watery touch. He seemed to descend from Monet, not Cézanne; people saw reeds and clouds and pond lilies in his pictures. He was an inspiring teacher, too, and even those people who privately thought that he belonged to the second string of American abstract artists recognized something fastidious and incorruptible in his work.

Then, when he was in his fifties, Guston began a violent, agonized repudiation of his own art. "Amercan Abstract art is a lie, a sham, a cover-up for a poverty of spirit," he wrote. "A mask to mask the fear of revealing oneself. . . . It s laughable, this lie. Anything but this!" He began to draw and paint a repentant catalogue of all the mundane objects that had been excluded from his art for the past quarter century: old shoes, rusted nails, mended rags, brick walls, cigarette butts, empty windows, naked light bulbs, wooden floors, faces with day-old stubble. His fluent style became halting, and, as time passed, the figures in his once high-minded paintings and drawings came to recall the characters in the comic strips of the thirties and forties: the guys at "Our Boarding House" or the bums in "Powerhouse Pepper." People who admired Guston tried to discern some saving political content in the new work, but most people found it painful, or even embarrassing, to look at what seemed so relentless an act of remorse and self-repudiation.

And yet less than a decade after his death Guston's apostasy has become a new faith. The Museum of Modern Art has just opened a major retrospective of Guston's drawings—the majority of them come from his late, figurative period—and an intricate, gentle memoir of Guston by his daughter, Musa Mayer, has recently been published. (There is not yet a biography of de Kooning or Kline or Barnett Newman.) Guston is now seen as more prophet than penitent. His late paintings are regarded as the precursors of the expressionist figurative painting of the eighties, and the blunt candor of his late drawings is thought to have recalled art to its responsibility to tell the truth about the world around it. In fact, Guston's reputation has been reëvaluated so radically in the years since his death that there is even a revisionist history of the reëvaluation. Magdalena Dabrowski, the curator of the MOMA exhibition, has written a meticulous catalogue essay that attempts to show that Guston's late style is less disruptive than it looks. She argues that Guston's "cartoon" style is essentially continuous with his abstract style—that the themes and concerns, and even the specific images, of the late work are present in his painting from its beginnings.

Guston's art, however, does not seem to fit either explanation. To see Guston as the proud father of neo-expressionism or as a virtuoso semiotician passing back and forth between abstraction and "realistic" painting seems to slight the rage and courage of his time on the heath. It's hard to accept the transformation in late Guston as merely a sophisticated formal game, yet it's also hard not to sense in all of Guston's work a continuity of spirit. To the very end of his life, Guston



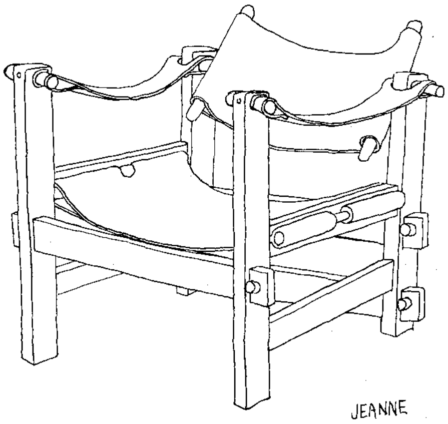
"Hey, baby—that doesn't mean you!"

remained loyal to the attitudes and beliefs that produced abstraction in the first place—those attitudes and beliefs which used to be pigeonholed as "existentialist." (Musa Mayer numbers among her father's favorite authors Kafka, Kierkegaard, Beckett, and Sartre.) The conviction that the absurdity and shame of modern life obliged the artist to search for an authentic style in the refuse heaps of the old official culture—that a modern style had to be made from spatter cloths and vaudeville skits and unposted letters—was always Guston's faith. That at the end of his life he chose the vaudeville skit rather than the spatter cloth—that he chose to express his faith in a cycle of muted ironic parables rather than in a set of defiant painterly gestures—may have had less to do with any academic quarrel between abstraction and figuration than with Guston's slow recognition of where his best gifts lay. For the most part, the New York School translated the mordant and bleakly comic spirit of its literary gods into a heroic, epic style. But Guston didn't have a gift for painterly transcendentalism: when he tried it, it ended up looking comfortable. "You are the best storyteller around, and I am the best organ player," Mark Rothko once said to Guston, during the time when Guston's paintings were still entirely abstract.

Rothko was right. Guston was, in the best sense, a "literary" painter. Only by pushing his essentially literary gift all the way into illustration could he find an original style. His late drawings suggest the world of "Endgame" with an almost Tenniel-like literalness. But by embracing illustration Guston finally found a private transcendence. His very last paintings and drawings go beyond his literary models, and have the force of great religious art. They are the improbable, appropriate icons found at the end of the pilgrimage of the New York School.

GUSTON was born Philip Goldstein. His parents, like Saul Bellow's, were Montreal Jews. According to Musa Mayer, they lived in a French-Canadian neighborhood, which must have added an extra layer of estrangement to the usual Jewish-immigrant burden. In an attempt to find "a friendlier climate," Guston's father moved the family from Canada to California when Philip was six. The move turned out disastrously. Guston's father, who had been a machinist in Montreal, could find work only as a junkman in Los Angeles. He fell into despair, and took his own life when Philip was ten or eleven. (It may be a sign of the depth of the family's shame over the suicide that Musa Mayer, a diligent biographer, has been unable to discover whether Guston's father died in 1923 or in 1924.) Guston discovered his father's body, hanging in a shed, and it's difficult not to see in his late landscapes of refuse and debris some echo of his father's life, and in his obsession, early and late, with knotted ropes and dangling pull cords some recollection of his father's death.

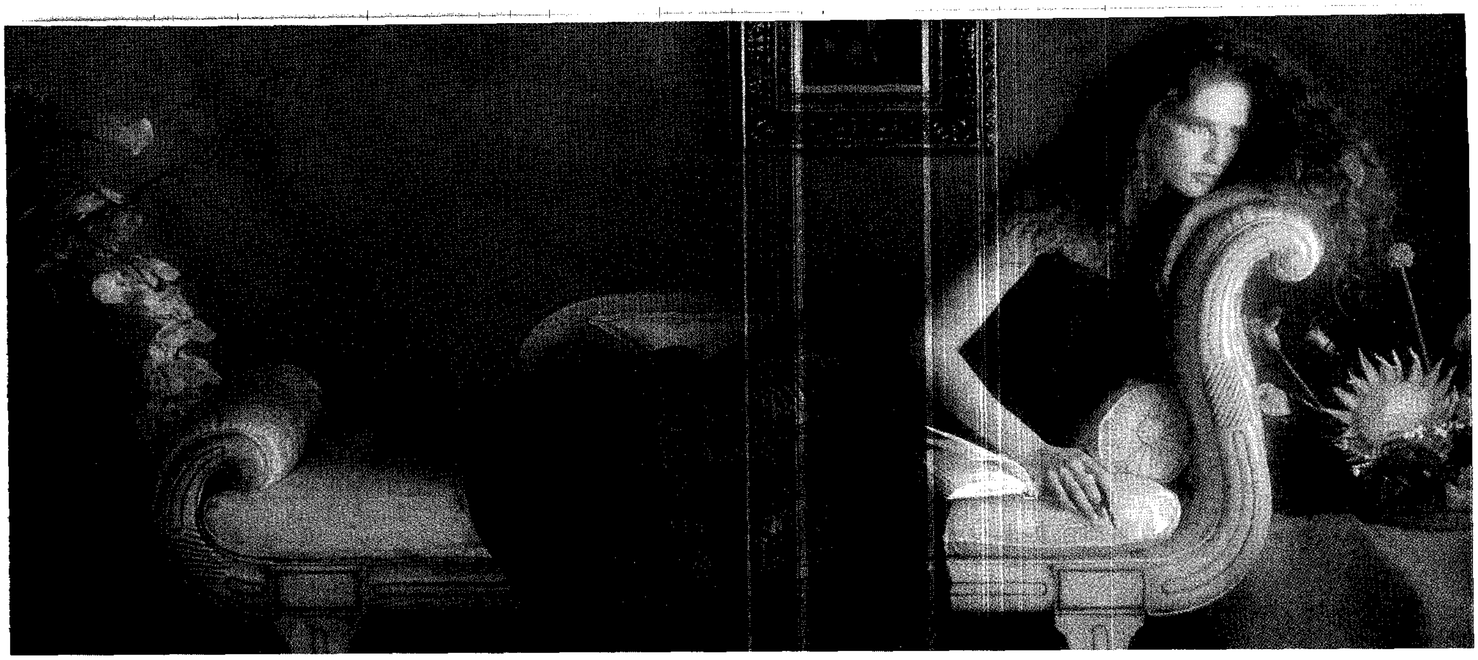
The year after his father died, Guston discovered art. His early tastes were curiously twinned: he wanted to become a cartoonist, and he fell in love with Piero della Francesca. Guston's early career as a cartoonist never seems to have gone much further than a few correspondence courses with the Cleveland School of Cartooning, but Piero, as Magdalena Dabrowski points out, remained with him for the rest of his life, and Guston's peculiar reading of Piero is a motive force in his late work. Guston apparently always coupled Piero with de Chirico—Renaissance form with its parody—and to see Piero through de Chirico was to see something inherently ambiguous and unsettling. The abstractions and simplifications of Piero's style seem humane because of his absolute faith in the mathematical system of proportion; de Chirico showed Guston that one had only to untune that system by a microtone to make it seem weird and dreamlike. The reassuring whole notes and tonic cadences in Piero—his standing figures—are almost never echoed in Guston's work. (One of Guston's few upright self-supporting figures is a woman in a drawing from 1939 who stands, eyes closed, inside her coffin.)



When Guston spent a year in Europe, after the Second World War, what he admired most was not the architectural painters who had drawn him to art in the first place—Piero and Masaccio and Michelangelo—but the "painterly" painters, particularly Tintoretto, Titian, and El Greco. The sense that form was something inherited and secondhand, while the act of painting was immediately experienced and life-giving, remained basic to Guston's art. In every period of his work, the forms are almost always borrowed —paraphrased and simplified—from other artists and image-makers. His gift was for painting—for rendering familiar forms in ways that slowed them down or speeded them up.

Like so many artists of his generation, Guston first became well known for his political art. (He actually went to Mexico and collaborated on a mural in the manner of Orozco and Diego Rivera.) There is a single example of Guston's political art in the MOMA show: a drawing of Klansmen, improbably placed in a de Chirico-like plaza with a lynched black man in the background while in the front of the picture a solitary Klansman contemplates a rope. It must be one of the least effective images of political indignation ever drawn: the Klansmen don't look evil—they look like penitents or mourners.

Guston returned from Europe in 1949, and by then the first heroic steps in the establishment of Abstract Expressionism had been taken. Guston's abstract paintings have always been seen as a second-generation style, but it now looks like false genealogy to say that they descend from Monet's painterliness rather than from Cézanne's sense of architectural form. Guston never had Monet's gift for wrapping a surface with a skein of marks, at once dense and transparent—the spider-web sense of form that one also finds in Pollock's poured paintings. Guston's early drawings look like outline paraphrases of Cézanne still-lifes. His best drawings, particularly



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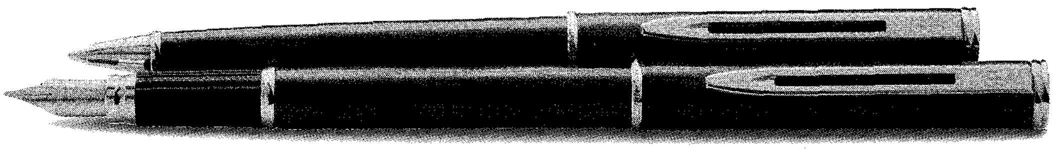

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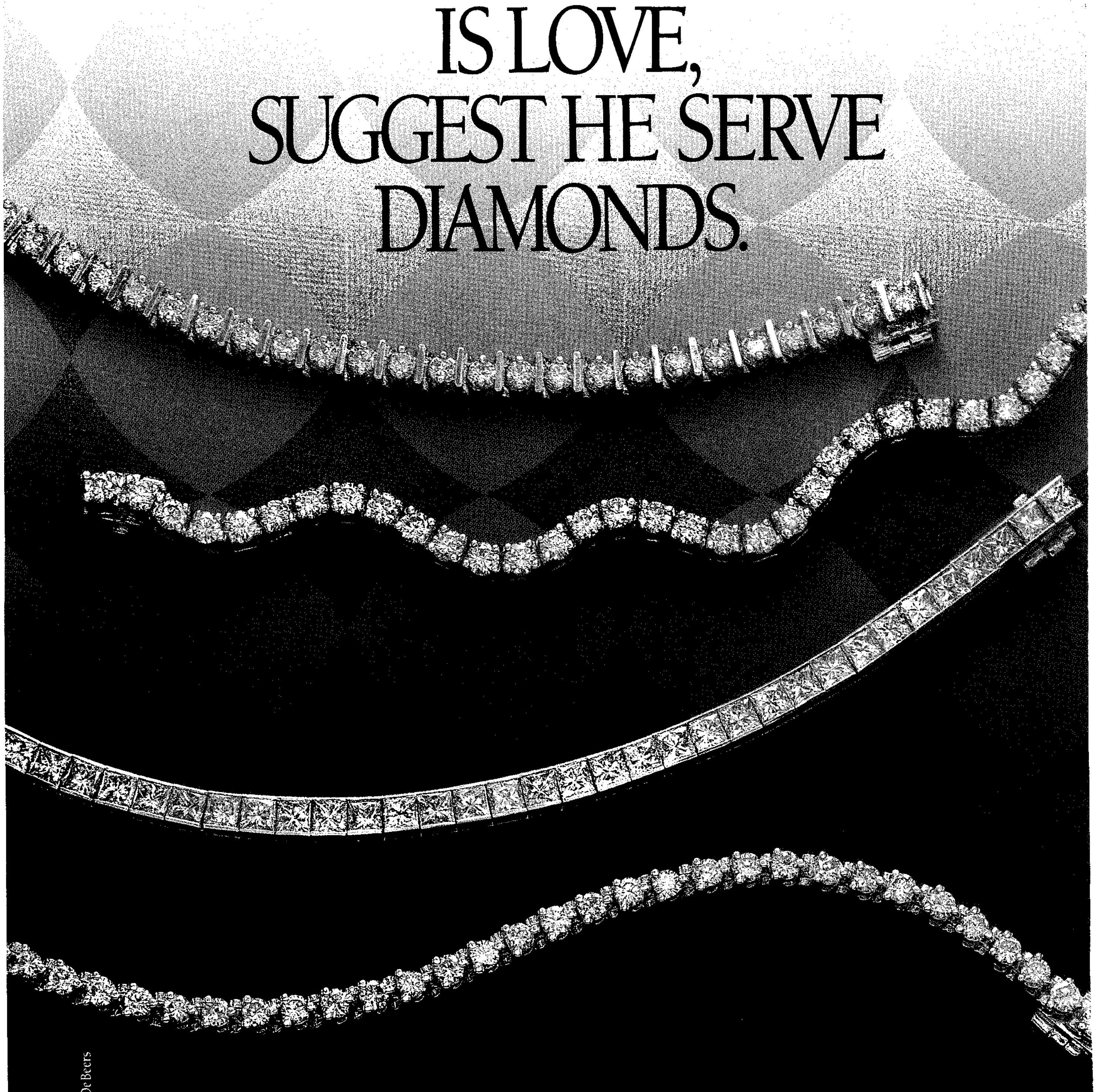

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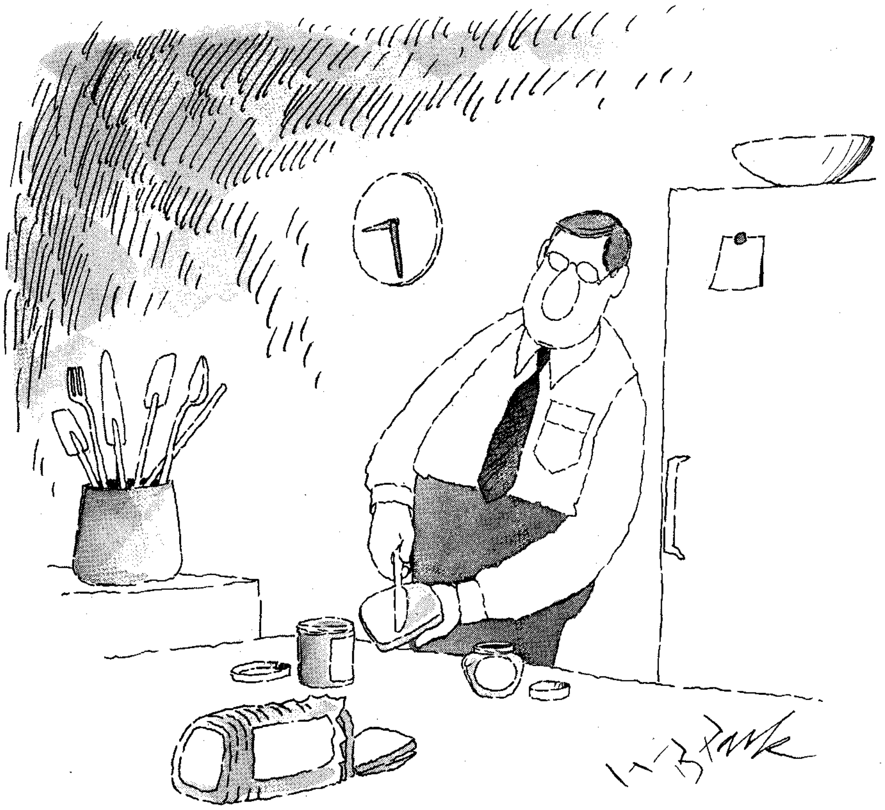
those from 1950 and 1951, also have a Klee-like whimsy and narrative invention: the Cézanne outlines bump and collide and apologize to each other. One wonderful drawing from 1951 has, in abstract form, all the awkward comedy of Guston's late pictures; a little roller-coaster car of pears approaches a vertical outline that looks vaguely like a woman's body seen in profile, and then the pears seem to collapse into each other from sheer embarrassment. But for the most part Guston's abstract drawings look terribly dated now; they have a "period" quality, and seem curiously passive and claustrophobic.

Still, Guston stuck to abstraction, and the era buoyed him up. What is striking in the series of drawings that Guston made in 1966-67, and which are generally held to herald his decisive repudiation of his abstract style, is not how "real" they look but how uncrowded. Drawings like "Wave II" and "Mark"—each a single gestural line—seem to signal not so much a return to figuration as a desire for emptiness.

The problem that Guston faced in the mid-sixties is often represented as a choice between continuing in a hermetic style that had cut itself off from the world and trying to reattach himself to life, but the truth seems very different. Older artists often need private styles, and abstraction had by then become irrevocably public. When Matisse, in the late forties, wanted a private style, he turned to abstraction precisely because it seemed to offer something monastic, removed, intimate. But by 1966 abstraction had become the official style of a rich and abundant culture, and to use it was inevitably to comment on history, not on experience. And, in any event, the much talked-about return to figuration is a false issue—one of those phenomena, like the "return to classic tailoring" in men's clothing, that seem to happen every other year.



8:28: Charles stood up and strode into the kitchen. Everything was in readiness. He selected a fresh piece of stone-ground whole-wheat bread and balanced it carelessly in his left hand. Behind him the electric wall clock hummed quietly. The peanut butter spread easily across the bread, Charles expertly turning the knife this way and that, guiding the creamy paste around the surface. The grape jelly proved more of a challenge, but he was equal to it. At precisely 8:30, he settled back into his chair, back into his reverie, back into the doubleheader.

• •

MORE important than any return to figuration was the kind of figuration that Guston returned to. The cartoon style that he eventually settled on looks familiar, and suggests some half-remembered Depression comic strip—a crudely drawn world of cold-water apartments, skinny, hairy legs, and upturned, Chaplinesque shoe soles. It's a style that summons up the cartoon's speed and brio only to slow it down, and subject it to entropy. Everything in this world is running down and growing old. The cross-hatchings that stand for shadow read just as easily as stubble, so that the whole world seems covered with five-o'clock shadow.

One way of describing this world is to say that it looks a lot like the world of R. Crumb, and the resemblance between Crumb's world and Guston's is so strong that it inevitably turns up in discussions of Guston's transformation. Dabrowski, in her essay, reproduces a cover from a Crumb *Comix* of the late sixties. Most critics treat the resemblance as one between an essentially anonymous popular style and a high style in transition, but in fact Crumb and Guston were both revivalists, and independently fell into the same style at the same time. The first Crumb cartoons that look like Guston drawings date from precisely the same period—the mid-sixties—as the first Guston drawings that look like Crumb cartoons.

Both men were in rebellion against the public style of their medium—Guston against the cheerful largesse of triumphant abstraction, Crumb against the phonyness of commercial entertainment—and they adapted a style that had been invented by George Herriman in the nineteen-twenties, in his illustrations for the Don Marquis "archy" poems. By 1966, it was in no possible sense a popular style. It had died, and been buried, and it had to be consciously revived in much the same way (though for radically different ends) that, say, Roy Lichtenstein revived Art Deco design at the same time.

Crumb, like Hogarth or Gillray, whom he very much resembles, is in some ways a more scabrously original

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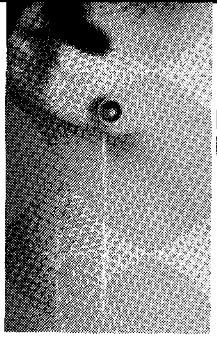

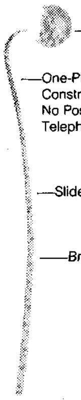

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draftsman than Guston. But for all his career he has remained rooted to the narrative conventions of the comic strip—balloons and panels. The evolution of Guston's work from 1966 on suggests the difference between imagery and art. Drawing on every resource of abstract composition, Guston slowly transformed and purified the inherited imagery, and made a narrative style into an iconic one.

Usually, Guston's late work is taken together as a brief, single development. It's one of the achievements of Dabrowski's exhibition and catalogue to show us that what had seemed like an inspired coda is in fact a full body of work, occupying almost fifteen years of Guston's life. We can also see that the late work has distinct episodes and a clear direction. His first efforts in the revived cartoon style used the Klansmen of his political images as its protagonists. The sympathy that was strangely and inadvertently latent in these figures from the beginning is now made explicit. The Klansmen go for trips in old convertibles, smoke cigars over breakfast, paint their own portraits, engage in finger-pointing intellectual arguments, lie awake in bed at night. Busyness and enterprise and hopelessness are inextricably bound together in their lives. Their essential pathos lies in the fact that, like Goya's monsters, they do not know that they are monsters.

As time went on, the storytelling was refined out of Guston's work. He gave up the Klansmen, and his protagonists became stubbled, balding, disembodied male heads, each with a single, visorlike eye. The Cyclops is Guston's self-portrait (in part, no doubt, a mordant play on Cézanne's famous line about Monet, which used to be applied to Guston: "Only an eye, but what an eye!"). In the Cyclops pictures, the compositional elegance of Guston's abstraction reappears, only now with what had been its weakness—its staginess and rhythmic lethargy—made strong by being placed at the service of an austere, personal vision.

By the last year of Guston's life, often even the Cyclops had been eliminated. Immobile knots of legs and pipes and lumber are laid out against an infinite, promising horizon. In one untitled drawing from that last year, the simplest slapstick props become symbols of approaching death. The paper is divided, like a child's drawing, into a

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narrow brown ground and a vast blue ky. There are two ladders in the picure. One, on the far left, has three rungs, is drawn in simple perspective, and soars upward. It has been taken rom that earlier deliberately comictrip-like image Miró's "Dog Barking at the Moon," where it evoked a world where heaven and earth are as neighborly as two apartments joined by a fire escape. Guston's other ladder has two rungs, and seems to be sinking beneath he horizon. On the right, in front of he two ladders, a cord dangles from he sky—a pull chain for turning out he light.

Both Dabrowski and Mayer talk of he effect that Guston's late work had on the neo-expressionism of the eightes, but neither names a single Amerian painter who is supposed to show hat influence. If there is a "new figurative painting" in our decade, its pirit is not Guston's by a mile. The most emotionally intense figurative painters of our time—Fischl, Rothenberg, Kiefer—all descend from paintrly traditions that flow right around Guston's morbid vaudeville, while hose painters whose taste for a caroon-like style does seem to resemle Guston's have not understood it. Guston put on the mask of Herriman or the same reason that Beckett put on he mask of Keaton. He became a omedian because he had the insight to ee in a popular style an undercurrent f anxiety and dread which could be magnified and cultivated and still emain strangely tender and unpreentious. For the new cartoon paintrs, popular style either seems to be he only style they know or else it s beloved because, in its apparent nonymity, it holds out a promise f blank detachment and ironic self-rotection.

The wisest and most appropriate tribute to Guston in our decade has een drawn by R. Crumb. It appeared n 1983, on the cover of Crumb's guerilla comic-strip magazine *Weirdo*. Obviously startled by the resemblance of his private underground language to he latest thing in the museums, Crumb aithfully copied Guston's stubbled Cyclops heads, with a cityscape in the background, and titled the cover "A Fine-Art Piece of Business." Coming from one of the heads is a dialogue balloon. "Oh what a fool I've been," Crumb has Guston say. "And will continue to be." —ADAM GOPNIK

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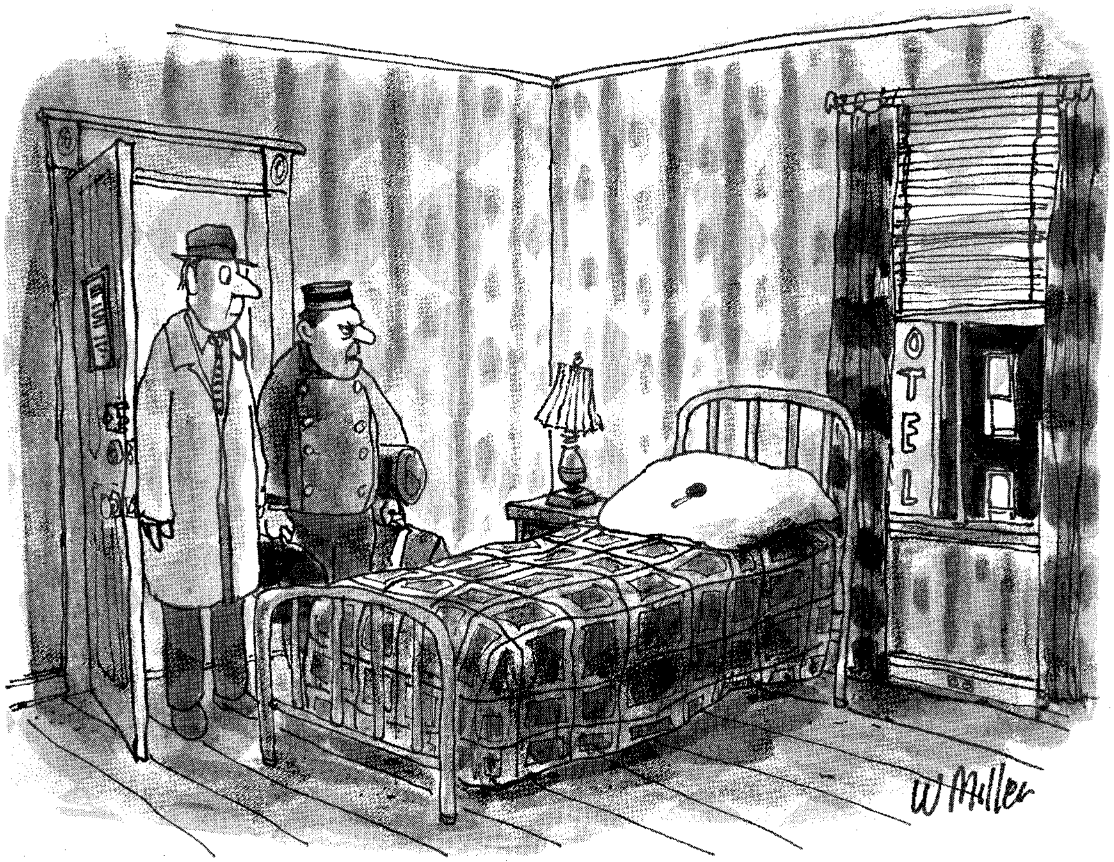
THE monumentality of Richard Wagner exceeds the sum of its parts, themselves monumental. There is no other composer whose music has so emphatically marked the spirit of the age. The librettos that Wagner wrote are of inexhaustible dramatic oddity and fascination. The libretto of "Die Meistersinger" is more: it may well be the most humanely prodigal—the most Shakespearean—comedy in modern literature. Wagner was an essayist, critic, theoretician, pamphleteer of extraordinary range and polemic drive. The revolutionary, even socialist, convictions of his early life, the conservatism and deepening racism of his ripeness embody with rare scenic force the ideological and militant power relations of the nineteenth century.

Wagner's personal life was of a matching vehemence and theatricality. A Wagner day often encompassed extremes of creativity and despair, of intellectual appetite and emotional spending greater than those in an ordinary human existence. His travels, during which he was sometimes in drag and chased by creditors and sometimes amid almost regal opulence and acclaim, spanned Europe from Riga to Sorrento. The somatic strength of the man was such that the faces of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as one sees them today in the shrine at Bayreuth, bear an uncanny similitude to Wagner's beaked features. The need for record, for self-historicization, in Richard Wagner was concomitant with the turbulent immensity of the art and of the life. Wagner bestowed on his contemporaries numerous autobiographical sketches. He dictated voluminous memoirs. He encouraged painters and sculptors to immortalize his person. Few figures in the history of either politics or the arts have been more caricatured, silhouetted, engraved. And the letters poured.

We know of some twelve thousand. There were undoubtedly more. The most celebrated correspondences—with Liszt, with King Ludwig II of Bavaria, with Mathilde Wesendonck (*the Isolde of the Zurich years*), with Hans von Bülow and Cosima (first von Bülow's wife, then Wagner's, and at all times Liszt's child)—have long been published and studied (though with discretionary cuts and omissions). The letter writer in Wagner is of a piece with the man: trenchant, histrionic, cunning in rhetoric, breathless, patiently calculating, and, where matters of staging and of music are concerned, of magisterial brilliance. Had we only the letters, something of the elemental stature of this "overman," of this presence "human, all too human" (two phrases coined by Wagner's sometime disciple and correspondent Nietzsche), would come through. As ground bass and ornamentation to the works and days of the Master (as he was known to many during his lifetime), they are invaluable.

Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington have made a selection of five hundred of the letters. The translation, by Mr. Spencer, is vigorous and colloquial, and is charged with the living voice of the writer. There are inexactitudes or compromises: in the important critique of Berlioz's "Romeo and Juliet" in March, 1841, "the insipidity of the work's outward economy" does not justly render the German; "its effectiveness must appear almost uniquely determinative" (Wagner to Hanslick in January, 1847, in a major statement about the relation between music and poetry) is opaque past the admitted concision of the original. But there are not many reservations to be expressed about this spacious project. The editorial notes and the biographical essays, which relate successive phases in Wagner's life, are admirably lucid and



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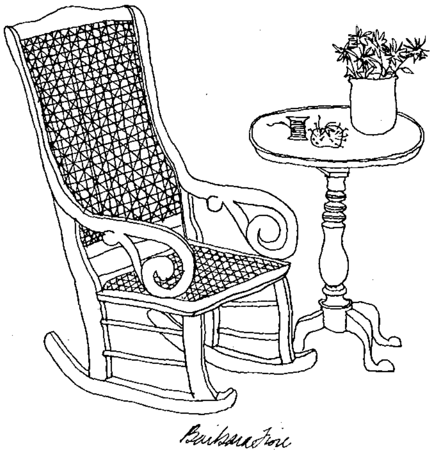
nformed. The makeup and the typography are inviting. The editors have made available a number of passages not previously in reach of the general reader. In short, "Selected Letters of Richard Wagner" (Norton; $35) is a east.

Some may want to read consecutively, arriving at a conspectus from within of Wagner's prodigious career, a progress that led from destitution and revolutionary fervor to a measure of anctification never before accorded an artist in his lifetime. Others may prefer o follow through a given set of exchanges, with Nietzsche, with the Wesendoncks, with royal Ludwig. Using the excellent index, one can trace he composition and fortunes of this or hat work—of the "Ring," for instance. The letters allow us to observe he immense cycle from its inception, n 1848, to its completion, in 1874, hough the documentation still leaves carcely plausible the inner coherence of a design, of a philosophic-musical act of begetting which, despite long nterruptions and radical changes within Wagner himself, kept its momentum, its secret sinews of continuity, across twenty-six years. Yet another pproach to this collection is to adopt he Wagnerian concept of the leitmotiv, and trace an intellectual theme, a personal obsession, a public or private equence in Wagner's sensibility and life history. This is a particularly enlightening way of reading, because Wagner's personal relations, as these letters express them, are inseparable rom issues of intellectual polemic as well as of creation.

FINE-COMBED as it has been in a dozen monographs and more general studies, Wagner's long intimacy with Franz Liszt still does not yield all its intensities and convolutions. The Liszt whom the young Wagner meets in Paris in the late autumn of 1840 and to whom he writes in March, 1841, is a European force whose patronage, whose eventual commendation of a budding composer-conductor, will prove decisive. It is Liszt who will, with a characteristic acuity of recognition and characteristic generosity, be among the very first to recognize Wagner's genius. It is he who will seek to produce the operas and perform the music of Wagner in Germany during the composer's lengthy exile after 1849. It is Liszt's transcriptions for piano which will gradually make the "new music" available to alert ears. Wagner's attitudes are, almost from the first, ambiguous. Undoubtedly, he registered Liszt's genius as a virtuoso, as an impresario, and, within a certain range, pianistic and choral, as a composer. He knew and often responded with genuine enthusiasm to the greatheartedness of his protector and publicist. Had they not, in an hour of peculiar desolation for Wagner, exchanged a literal kiss on the lips, in the very image of the Christology that so deeply animated Liszt's faith and works? But there was too much in Liszt's mundanity, in his immense success, and in his music that repelled Wagner. Wagner could not help seeing himself as the savior of art, of German nationhood—as the only true apostolic heir to Beethoven. Precisely this vision entailed the notion of Liszt as either a St. John the Baptist, privileged to proclaim and serve a greater coming, or, potentially, a Judas (that kiss).

It was during the winter of 1858-59 that the cracks opened. Liszt had, it is true, rhapsodized over the marvels of the first act of "Tristan," which he had just received. He was, no doubt, striving with all his generous influence to have Wagner's early opera "Rienzi" staged in Weimar. But he ventured to reproach Wagner for the opulence of his life style: he had bridled, however gently, at the incessant cries for money. Wagner's riposte, on December 31, 1858, is still robustly good-natured:

> My Franz, when you see the second act of Tristan, you'll admit that I need a lot of money. I'm a great spend-thrift; but, really, it does produce results.—You know that. But just think about it. . . . All that I need from the world is money: apart from that I have *everything*.—It is *you* and your delight in the 1st act of Tristan that are to blame for this fit of high spirits on my part. When you get to know the second act, you'll even be able to forgive me for doing nothing today except to shout out for—money! Money!—How and from whom doesn't matter. Tristan will repay it all!



But only a week later the tone turns ugly. Liszt's wealth, the ease with which *his* works are produced exasperate Wagner. Liszt is no longer capable of putting himself in Wagner's position "with enough understanding." He is still the "strange and dear, dear friend!," but a deep unease surfaces. It will, of course, be aggravated by Wagner's liaison, so public, so duplicitous in respect of von Bülow, with Liszt's daughter, Cosima. Wagner's letter to Countess Marie d'Agoult, Liszt's companion and Cosima's mother, in August, 1870, three days before his marriage to Cosima (she had been living with Wagner, on and off, for years), is among the most canting feline, and ostentatiously overblown ever penned by a great spirit. The relationship was—professionally, at least—mended. Liszt did not attend the foundation ceremonies at Bayreuth or the first "Ring," of 1876. But he remained loyal to a genius surpassing even his own, and the piano piece he wrote in premonition of Wagner's death, in Venice, is one of the most haunting, most concentrated valedictions one master creator has ever bestowed upon another.

The irruption of young Professor Friedrich Nietzsche, of the University of Basel, into Wagner and Cosima's life in May, 1869, produced stellar hours for both men. Overwhelmed by Schopenhauer's philosophy of music as pure will and by Schopenhauer's ideal of ultimate, transfigurative renunciation of the world, Wagner found in Nietzsche a long-awaited spiritual son. Nietzsche had published hardly anything but a handful of philological papers. Nevertheless, Wagner at once sensed the incandescent brilliance, the visionary audacity in his visitor. Nietzsche's "Socrates and Tragedy" excited him profoundly. In "The Birth of Tragedy" Wagner found not only an epochal originality but the setting out of a radicalized Wagnerian ideal of Dionysian-tragic art and of the redemption of culture through music. Nietzsche made no fewer than twenty-three visits to Tribschen, Wagner and Cosima's dream refuge on the shore of Lake Lucerne. Here the Bayreuth project—the goal of re-creating a playhouse, an audience, an aesthetic-

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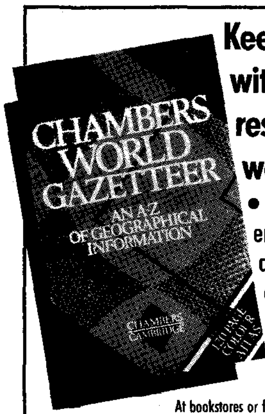
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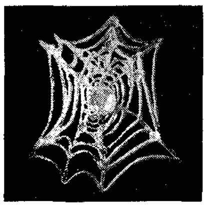
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religious ambience corresponding to that of the holy theatres of ancient Athens or Epidaurus—took philosophic and pragmatic form. (Once again, the arc of continuity defies belief: the germs of the Bayreuth idea—the concept of a "Wagner playhouse" uniquely suitable for the Master's works, as yet largely unwritten—can be found in a letter of September, 1850.) It was to be Nietzsche who, by virtue of his winged prose and academic prestige (Wagner had the true German's appreciation of the professorial, even where he felt himself superior to it), would formulate and propagandize the ideals, the metaphysical-historical legitimacy of the temple at Bayreuth. And at first, in a set of ardent tracts, Nietzsche did so.

But a canker lay at the roots. As Nietzsche "became what he was" (his own lapidary formula), he discerned, with peerless psychological antennae, both the mountebank element in Wagner and the incipient religiosity. The proclaimer of the high, cold mountain winds, the herald of "the death of God," fled Bayreuth. Wagner strove to win him back. Not altogether erroneously, he suspected nervous disorder and a bent toward self-destruction in the rebellious prodigal. Uncharacteristically, the editors wax ironic over Wagner's diagnosis and therapeutic suggestions. But, naïve as these were, Wagner's intuition of a sexual source of Nietzsche's afflictions was not wide of the mark. What even he did not fathom, certainly at the beginning of the crisis, was the depth of Nietzsche's "transvaluation of all values," of which the Wagner world *had* to be a target, or the tortured, symbolically laden tenor of Nietzsche's feelings toward Cosima, the Ariadne of his poems, songs, and last fantastications. Having before us Nietzsche's writings pro and contra Wagner, Nietzsche's voluminous letters, those of Wagner to and about Nietzsche, and, since its recent publication, Cosima's diary for the later years, we are made privy to one of the most creative, psychologically and philosophically seminal triangulations of all human encounter.

WAGNER's relations with women have bred bookshelves laden, for the most part, with overheated trivia. Yet the theme does remain perennially absorbing. Astutely introspective and self-dramatizing, Wagner observe both his own intense femininity—th strain of the androgynous which seem to be essential to supreme aestheti genius—and his ardent need to eroticize, to focus on a beloved and redemptory woman the act of poetic an musical composition. In a telling simile, he declared that "women are ver much the music of life." In a letter o January, 1854, he stated his centra conviction:

> The highest satisfaction of individua egoism is to be found in its total abandonment, and this is something which huma beings can achieve only through love: bu the true human being is both man an woman, and only in the union of man an woman does the true human being exist and only through love, therefore, do ma and woman become human. . . . But it i the union of man and woman, in othe words, love, that creates (physically an metaphorically) the human being, and jus as the human being can conceive of nothing more creatively brilliant than his ow existence and his own life, so he can neve again surpass that act whereby he becam human through love; he can only repea it . . . and it is this repetition which alon makes possible the unique nature of thi love whereby it resembles the ebb and flo of the tide, changing, ending, and livin anew.

Already, in the sovereign Guignol o "Lohengrin" and "Tannhäuser," th credo of rebirth through love and sexual union had been blazoned forth. Bu the much deeper enigma of "uniqueness in repetition"—of the tidal motion that is both extinction and resurrection—found expression in "Tristan": the supreme opus metaphysicum, as Nietzsche was to call it.

The Wagner–Mathilde Wesendonck affair is all too celebrated. Bu the dialectic of eros and poetic-technical invention which produced "Tristan" and impelled Wagner's genius t the summit of its powers between hi first meeting with Mathilde, in February, 1852, and the slow ebbing of hi need for her as Cosima entered hi life, in the early eighteen-sixties, ha lost nothing of its wonder. Imagin our having some intimate erotic o counter-erotic record of Shakespear during the years of "Hamlet" o "Lear."

A note to Liszt in November, 1853 offers an exalted disjunction betwee two key words usually fused:

> Oh, I am *in love!*—and so divine a fait inspires me that I have no need any longe —even of *hope!*

The "Wesendonck Songs" and every bar of "Tristan" tell of the tempesuous Zurich idyll. Mathilde is not so much the object of Wagner's creative passion as its guarantor, the inaccessible presence that modulates desire and the ecstasy of the particular into a universal vision. Wagner knows full well what he is producing. From Lucerne, mid-April, 1859:

> Child! This Tristan is turning into omething *terrible!* . . .
>
> I fear the opera will be banned—unless he whole thing is parodied in a bad performance—: only mediocre performances an save me! Perfectly *good* ones will be bound to drive people mad,—I cannot magine it otherwise.

Even here, in ecstatic hyperbole and he wild rush of creation, Wagner hows an almost Shakespearean or Mozartian touch of humor, of self-rony.)

In early August, 1860, Wagner ooked back. To Mathilde:

> Tristan is and remains a miracle to me! find it more and more difficult to understand how I could have done such a thing: when I read through it again, my eyes and ars fell open with amazement! . . . if only could hear the orchestra!!

Wagner, of course, did not hear his wn operas performed during the long ears of his exile. And nothing in the man's dimensions is more resistant to ommon understanding than his capacity for composing not only "Tristan" ut the first act of "Die Meistersinger" nd much of the "Ring" during a time when the "Wagner sound," now so much a part of our culture—the actual rchestral effects that would or would not validate his theories—was available solely to his inner ear.

What novelist would be brazen nough to invent the occasion (and here may have been more than one) on which Wagner entertained simultaneously the three principal women in his life? In the late summer of 1857, von Bülow, on his honeymoon, brought his oung bride, Cosima, to Wagner's Zurich establishment. There, between the fifth and the twenty-eighth of September, they met both Wagner's long-suffering wife, Minna, and the Master's benefactress and beloved, Mme. Wesendonck. The complexity of Wagner's sentiments, conscious and atent, can be guessed from his letter to von Bülow of January 18, 1858. He apologizes for those habits of verbal frankness, of critical asperity, that have lost him many friends. His style of talk must have upset the young Mme. Cosima. Obviously, "she really feels rather embarrassed in my presence," he writes. "I should very much regret having been over-familiar. . . . But I am certain that on this occasion it amounts to no more than a misunderstanding. My entirely unthinking familiarity towards people whom I find sympathetic has already lost me many friends." And then a sentence as eerily dense with futurity as the opening chords of the "Tristan" prelude: "I hope that your dear young wife will not be estranged from me for any length of time." By March 1st (the love for Mathilde is still rapturous and *truthful*), the Master addresses Cosima herself: "And so that you, my dear child, may also come in total trust . . ." Only a psyche immersed in such ambivalence, in profound friendships (with Liszt, with Otto Wesendonck, with von Bülow) that were also utmost betrayals, could have conceived of the King Mark music in "Tristan" or of Sachs's renunciation of Eva in "Die Meistersinger." Wagner lied, persistently and *con brio*. But his music affirms the greater truths within the lies. It is only the coda that this selection of letters and biographical material leaves opaque. Is it or is it not the case that Cosima intercepted a love letter to Wagner from one of the younger Bayreuth singers, a Flower Maiden out of "Parsifal," and that the ensuing quarrel triggered the Master's fatal stroke? The touch of melodrama, in his rented Venetian palace, would have been in style.

WAGNER's anti-Semitism is a fiercely vexed topic. Its roots are complex and not altogether discernible. Did Wagner, at some half-conscious level (as, it may be, Hitler did), believe that he himself was tainted with Jewish blood? Was the actor Ludwig Geyer, whose aquiline features and histrionic gifts so closely foreshadowed Wagner's own, really only his stepfather? The notorious pamphlet on "Judaism in Music," of September, 1850, is one of a swarm of mid-nineteenth-century anti-Semitic tracts. It reflects widely held views about Jewish infiltration of the commanding heights of musical and theatrical life, about the essential Jewish sterility in respect of authentic artistic-poetic invention, and about the degeneration of European culture because of Jewish mercantile and fiscal obsessions. But there are also professional motives. Mendelssohn and

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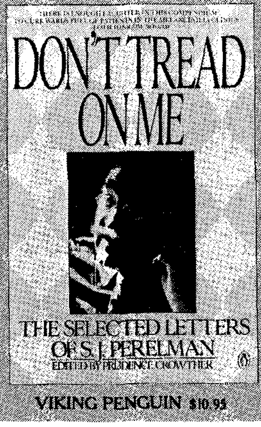
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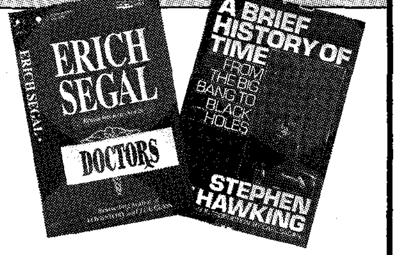

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Meyerbeer, the most successful operatic composer and impresario of the day, had known prosperity and universal acclaim. Meyerbeer had been cordial to the aspiring Wagner, and that very cordiality rankled insufferably. Wagner's Jew hatred grew. There are bestial moments in Cosima's diary when the Master urges the ostracism, perhaps the actual eradication, of all European Jews. The Jews were responsible for both hostile critiques and inferior productions of his works: "What we once strove to achieve in Munich has now—like everything else —passed into Jewish hands." Even as Poland has been ruined by the Jews, so will Germany be, he writes. It is the ubiquitous, sleazy Jew who is destroying the spiritual, cultural capital of European civilization. A cardinal admission comes fairly early, in a letter to Liszt of April, 1851:

> I harboured a long suppressed resentment against this Jewish business, and this resentment is as necessary to my nature as gall is to the blood. . . . For they will always remain our masters—that much is as certain as the fact that it is not our princes who are now our masters, but bankers and philistines. Meyerbeer is a special case . . . it is not that I hate him, but that I find him infinitely repugnant. This perpetually kind and obliging man reminds me of the darkest—I might almost say the most wicked—period of my life, when he still made a show of protecting me.

Yet Jews were among the first Wagnerites. It was Jews who flocked to support and celebrate the Bayreuth dream, who spread the lambent word as to the magic of Wagner's music. The analogy to the current debate raging over the Nazism of the great philosopher Martin Heidegger, whose acolytes and eminent successors have also to a large extent been Jewish, is almost uncanny. Wagner himself was aware of the paradox. The preferred pianist at Wahnfried and the arranger of the vocal score of "Parsifal" was Joseph Rubinstein; the indefatigable producer of Wagner's operas outside Bayreuth was Angelo Neumann, very possibly of Jewish provenance; it was Hermann Levi to whom Wagner entrusted the almost sacred task of conducting the première of "Parsifal." Wagner's attitude was highly ambiguous. There was an ugly streak of cynicism in his exploitation of Jewish talent and adherence: "I . . . simply have to put up with energetic Jewish patronage, however curious I feel in doing so." His would, in any case, be a rearguar action:

> If I have friendly and sympathetic deal ings with many of these people, it is onl because I consider the Jewish race th born enemy of pure humanity and all tha is noble in man: there is no doubt but tha we Germans especially will be destroye by them, and I may well be the last re maining German who, as an artist, ha known how to hold his ground in the fac of a Judaism which is now all-powerful.

Yet one registers, particularly in Wag ner's intimate comments to Cosima, hi abiding fascination with Jewish vital ity, with the radical openness to experi ence of the accursed tribe that had s readily adopted the cause of his music

On that music, on its meanings an just enactment, the letters to Ludwig o Bavaria have long been an unrivalle document. In his relations with "m beautiful will and loving providence, with "my most beautiful, supreme, an only consolation" and "most mercifu font of grace," with one whose love o him and whose being loved by hin were "so wondrous and unheard-of that they must bring utmost happi ness to the jealous world, Wagner wa most marvellously and sinisterly him self. Here he was Lohengrin and Kun dry. Fully sensing Ludwig's homosex uality, Wagner deployed the arts o seduction, of enchantment, of homo erotic infatuation. He deceived th King about his relations with Cosima He milked his royal patron's largess with ever-renewed supplications an the blackmail of despair. Revolted b Wagner's insatiable mendacity, th King in the winter of 1867 began t lose patience. But the playacting an the *truth of mutual adoration* pre vailed. It was Ludwig who, in Febru ary, 1874, resolved, at grave politica cost, to underwrite the financing o Bayreuth. It was because of him tha the "Ring" opened for mankind. An if Wagner's letters to his savior an bewitched protector are brimful of the atricality, of panting solicitation an deliberate ruse, they are no less yield ing of an intellectual force and clarit of genius in regard to the work.

It is to the King, from 1864 onward that Wagner reveals what he takes t be the aesthetic and philosophic inten of the "Ring," of "Die Meister- singer," and, above all, of "Parsifal. Nothing takes us nearer the worksho than the great letter of November 22, 1866, with its analysis of the prelude to

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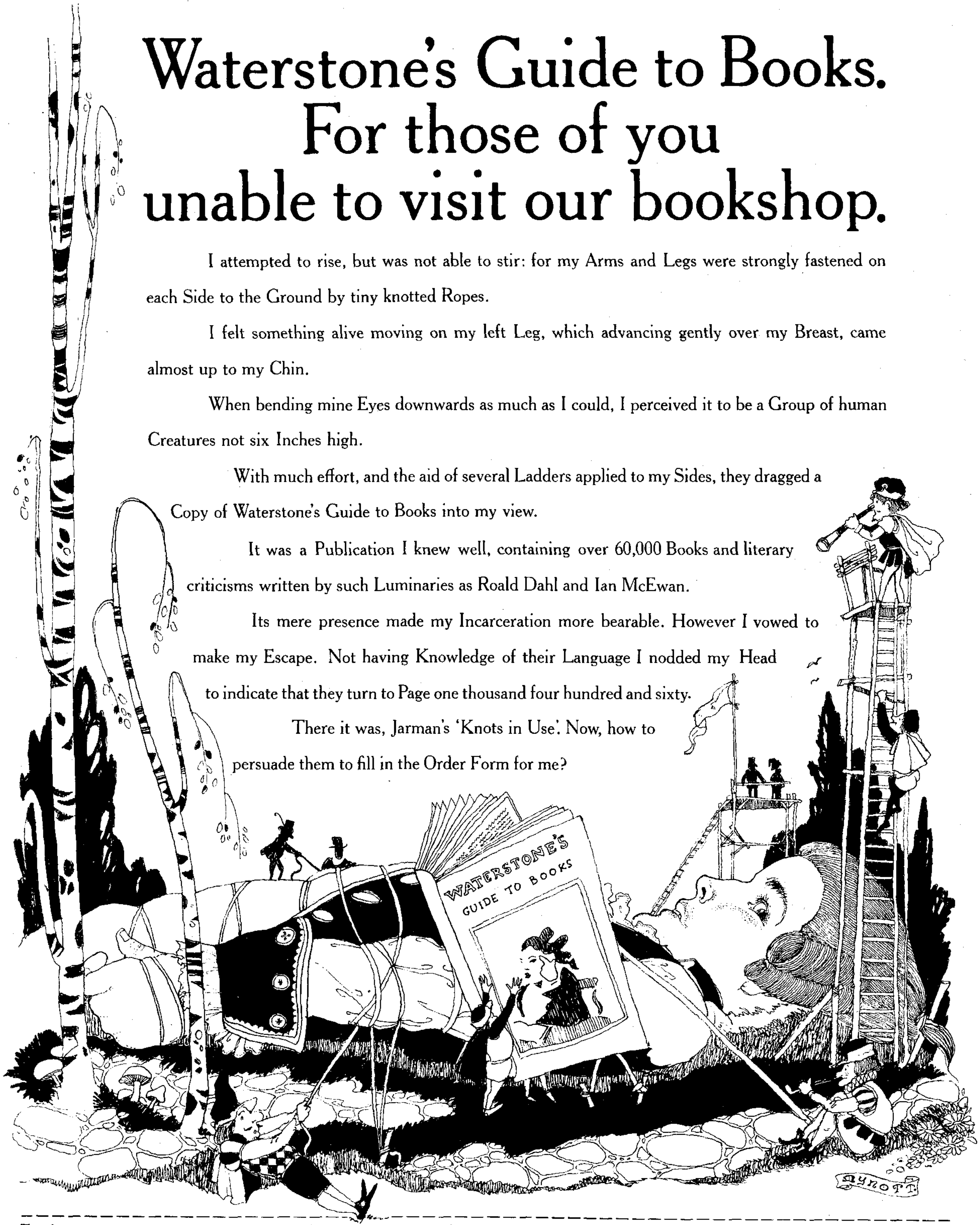

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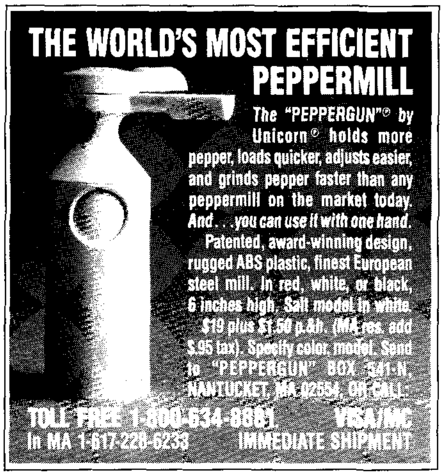

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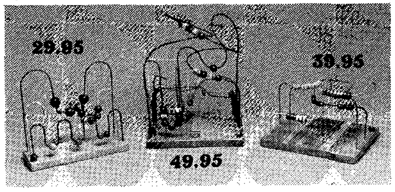

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Act III of "Die Meistersinger"—an analysis in which Wagner tells how the string motif, annunciatory of the Prize Song, will cause "the dust to dance a golden dance," a dance at once jubilant and tinged with "a smile of tender resignation." In a copious epistle to Ludwig of October 1, 1874, admirably translated in this selection, Wagner sets out his conception of Bayreuth and of the singular meaning of Bayreuth in regard to the "Ring." Each summer, audiences from across the world are legatees of that manifesto. It is in these communications to Ludwig that Wagner hammers out, principally for himself, the musical-mythological continuities and differentiations between Lohengrin (now so distant a figure, yet one immeasurably loved by the King), Siegfried, and Parsifal. It is to Ludwig, in the last year of his own life, that Wagner reveals the sharp contradictions within his spirit in regard to the performability of his final, supreme creation: "Parsifal" cannot be truly staged, yet somehow it must be. And, rereading these formidable letters, one realizes once more how close-meshed are the text and music of the Kundry-Parsifal relation with that of Wagner the magician and the "perfect fool" who made possible his implausible dreams. It is right that the closing letter in this volume should be addressed to Wagner's "most royal lord and most friendly of friends."

One puts down this cornucopia not only with intimations of having been given some access to the titanic. All sorts of somewhat frivolous questions nag. What would have happened if Wagner had carried out his repeated project of emigrating to North America? What if the very early perception that "I could as easily have become a charlatan as an artist" had taken more incisive hold? What might have come to pass if Wagner, with his bias toward ideology, with his genius for propaganda and organization, had made good on his fervent offer to Bakunin, after the catastrophes of 1848, to give his rescued life to the cause of revolutionary socialism? And exactly what answer did Herr Wagner give to Her Majesty Queen Victoria when she inquired of him as to Peps and Knackerchen, the Wagner dogs? (Like Nietzsche, like Hitler, Richard Wagner was a passionate lover of animals.)

What we have in hand here is of surpassing fascination. Only the works themselves convey more of the colossus who, for good and evil, or, as Nietzsche would argue, somewhere "beyond good and evil," continues to bestride our modernity. —George Steiner

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Labrador, by Kathryn Davis (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $17.95). A tale of two sisters that is both weird and enchanting, set mostly in a run-down house in New Hampshire in the early sixties and told mostly by Kitty, the younger and more introverted. She addresses her narrative to the delicate and manipulative Willie, whom she feared and envied as they were growing up. "You always made me tell you my dream first," she recalls, "and then, your face taut with astonishment, you would whisper, 'That's just like my dream! That's my dream exactly!'" Kitty describes their alcoholic father, their ineffectual mother, and an angel called Rogni, who appeared to her as a pale, muscular man and haunted her with disturbing fairy stories. In these, a secondary text unfolds, a reflection of Kitty's unconscious wrestling with her love for Willie. The book is powerful in the way it reveals the yearning the sisters have to be each other, when, of course, they couldn't be more different: Willie goes off to Philadelphia to dance in the ballet and becomes worldly, and Kitty travels to the far-off, freezing peninsula of Labrador. Ms. Davis's prose is dreamy and obsessively descriptive; either it is your cup of tea or it isn't. This is her first novel.

Summer's Lease, by John Mortimer (Viking; $19.95). A light novel invigorated by a mocking intelligence. Mr. Mortimer introduces us to a substantial middle-class London family called Pargeter—the husband, Hugh, his wife, Molly, their three girls (the eldest a sophisticate of fourteen), and Molly's father, the dandified columnist Haverford Downs—who have taken a villa for the month of August in the part of Tuscany known to its many British residents as Chiantishire. Molly is the chief character, and some peculiar happenings soon after the family's arrival at La Felicità send her sniffing out a mystery, which gives the story its narrative momentum. But the real hero—or anti-hero—is the seventy-seven-year-old Haverford Downs, a lifelong, never-say-die womanizer, bon vivant, and spinner of fraudulent reminiscences, who holds his granddaughters spellbound with explicit tales of conquest. Mr. Mortimer, like so many of his countrymen, has a deep appreciation of Italy and its sunlit beauty, and he makes no attempt to suppress it.

CHECKER AND THE DERAILLEURS, by Lionel Shriver (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $17.95). The idea that if Christ were to stage his Second Coming in the eighties it would be as a rock star is not illogical, even if he turns out to be, in the end, only saintly. In Checker Secretti, Shriver has created such a figure, a drummer whose band members are his apostles, and whose Judas, Eaton Striker, is Darth Vader in Eddie Haskell's clothing. Since Checker is only a rocker, he gets to find romance, in the attractively terrifying person of a glassblower, Syria Pyramus, and since he is a star only in the limited precincts of Astoria, Queens, we get treated to the lyricism of life there. And the novel is nothing if not lyrical, both in the internal assonances of its sentences—"the dapple of tabloid pages flapping down cracking sidewalks"—and in sentiment. It is fairy tale as well as theology, a domestic adventure story featuring wisdom. That the characters are outsized cartoons is apt, and the preaching is as cheerful as can be.

NOTE: "Great Wits," a collection of stories by Alice Mattison, has been published by Morrow ($16.95). Many of the stories originally appeared in *The New Yorker.*

GENERAL

PRIVATE DEMONS: THE LIFE OF SHIRLEY JACKSON, by Judy Oppenheimer (Putnam; $19.95). A thoroughgoing biographical scan of a unique talent in twentieth-century American literature. Shirley Jackson was in many ways the embodiment of the hackneyed phrase "her own worst enemy." She was a dedicated overindulger—in food, alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs—and she was ridden by fears and obsessions (she died, burned out, at forty-eight). On the other hand, Jackson was a woman of flashing intelligence, wit, and humor, whose energy allowed her to run a large, if messy, household that was a permanent liberty hall for a host of friends; raise four children; minister to a demanding husband (whom she worshipped); and, withal, produce a stream of short stories and novels that not only brought in money to keep the family in comfortable circumstances but also were of consistently high literary quality. Ms. Oppenheimer has presented a memorable closeup portrait. It is just possible, however, that she has told us too much about Jackson's neuroses and excesses. Photographs.

BANANA DIPLOMACY: THE MAKING OF AMERICAN POLICY IN NICARAGUA, 1981-1987, by Roy Gutman (Simon & Schuster; $19.95). A meticulous narrative of the Reagan Administration's activities in Central America. Mr. Gutman, *Newsday's* national-security correspondent, shows that by 1983 we had partly persuaded, partly compelled the Sandinistas to stop supporting guerrillas in El Salvador, and that that was all the Nicaraguan policy the voters wanted. The waste of money and lives, the fibs, the false alarms, the phony negotiations, and the Iran-Contra corruption that the author chronicles were the work of an ideologically obsessed right-wing cabal, determined to overthrow the Sandinista regime, that flourished in what he calls the President's "loose management structure." The work owes its persuasiveness to its accumulation of specifics. Mr. Gutman never pretends to omniscience, and he distinguishes between established facts, what he does not know with certainty, and his own opinions; when his sources disagree with each other, he reports their differing recollections.

FISHING WITH JOHN, by Edith Iglauer (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $19.95). In 1974, the author, a writer, married a commercial fisherman in his early sixties named John Daly, who earned a living trolling for salmon in the waters of British Columbia. This book is the animated and very circumstantial narrative of the four years she spent with Daly before his death—much of the time as deckhand and what he called "fishwife," aboard his forty-one-foot troller, the

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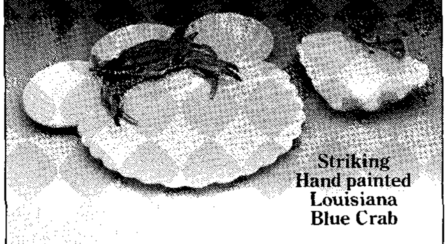
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MoreKelp. As Ms. Iglauer is the kind of writer who believes that if a thing is worth writing about you might as well go all out, we are given detailed descriptions of salmon fishing—the various kinds of salmon one can catch, the gear and lures used—as well as disquisitions on housekeeping and cookery afloat, seamanship in tricky waters, and any number of other disciplines and activities. The book is also a portrayal of an unusual man—a master of a difficult and dangerous craft who revered the natural world, and an autodidact with an extensive range of intellectual interests, liberal sympathies, and fierce prejudices. (A brief portion of this book appeared in *The New Yorker.*)

TWO LIVES, ONE RUSSIA, by Nicholas Daniloff (Houghton Mifflin; $19.95). The author, the former Moscow correspondent for *U.S. News and World Report*, tells of his arrest by the K.G.B. in August of 1986 and his two-week ordeal in Lefortovo prison at the hands of an interrogator determined to prove that he was an American spy. It was obvious from the start that Daniloff's arrest had been set up as a reciprocal action to the F.B.I.'s arrest of a Soviet spy in New York. The narrative is gripping: Daniloff didn't know, until the superpowers agreed to swap their accused spies, whether he was in for ten years in Siberia, or even a death sentence. (He reports, with anger, that some gratuitous and clumsy meddling by the C.I.A. nearly wrecked the deal.) The story has another dimension: Daniloff, who is of Russian descent, had stumbled on the fact that one of his forebears was implicated in the famous Decembrist conspiracy of Russian military officers to overthrow Czar Nicholas I, in 1825, and he resolved to track down this great-great-grandfather's history—one also of imprisonment and persecution by the state police. The account of his successful research runs parallel to that of his embroilment with the K.G.B., and the story of his ancestor adds richness, color, and poignance to his book. Photographs.

A WOMAN ON PAPER: GEORGIA O'KEEFFE, by Anita Pollitzer, edited by Clive Giboire (Touchstone/Simon & Schuster; $24.95 cloth, $12.95 paper). The author got to know Georgia O'Keeffe in New York in 1914, when both young women were in the same painting class at the Art Students League. They became close friends, and kept in touch, mainly by letter, for the rest of their lives. Although Pollitzer gave up painting, she never lost her devotion to art or her admiration for O'Keeffe's work. O'Keeffe, late in her career, agreed to coöperate on a memoir by her friend, but after Pollitzer lavished years, energy, and enthusiasm on a biography that would incorporate the intimate O'Keeffe-Pollitzer correspondence O'Keeffe refused permission to publish it. The book has had to wait until now, when both author and subject are dead. Although, as the editor says, Pollitzer did not plan a formal, scholarly biography, her memoir succeeds in combining the story of O'Keeffe's essentially lonely progress through life with a profound appreciation of her achievement as a painter. "After all," Mr. Giboire adds, Pollitzer "was the first person to realize the full implication of her friend's talent." Many illustrations.

MYSTERY AND CRIME

THE VEILED ONE, by Ruth Rendell (Pantheon; $17.95). In this new novel celebrating the excellent Chief Inspector Wexford, Miss Rendell shows us what she can do if she really tries. Starting with the fatal garroting of a middle-aged, middle-class housewife as she is entering her car in a shopping-center parking garage, the author takes us around the dead woman's suburban neighborhood and into the parlors of a number of possible suspects. These are all real people leading real lives and as Miss Rendell bends to her craft subplots develop (including one involving Wexford's famous actress daughter) that carry us off in directions that only seem devious. Miss Rendell has published some thirty books, and one hopes that there are thirty more to come.

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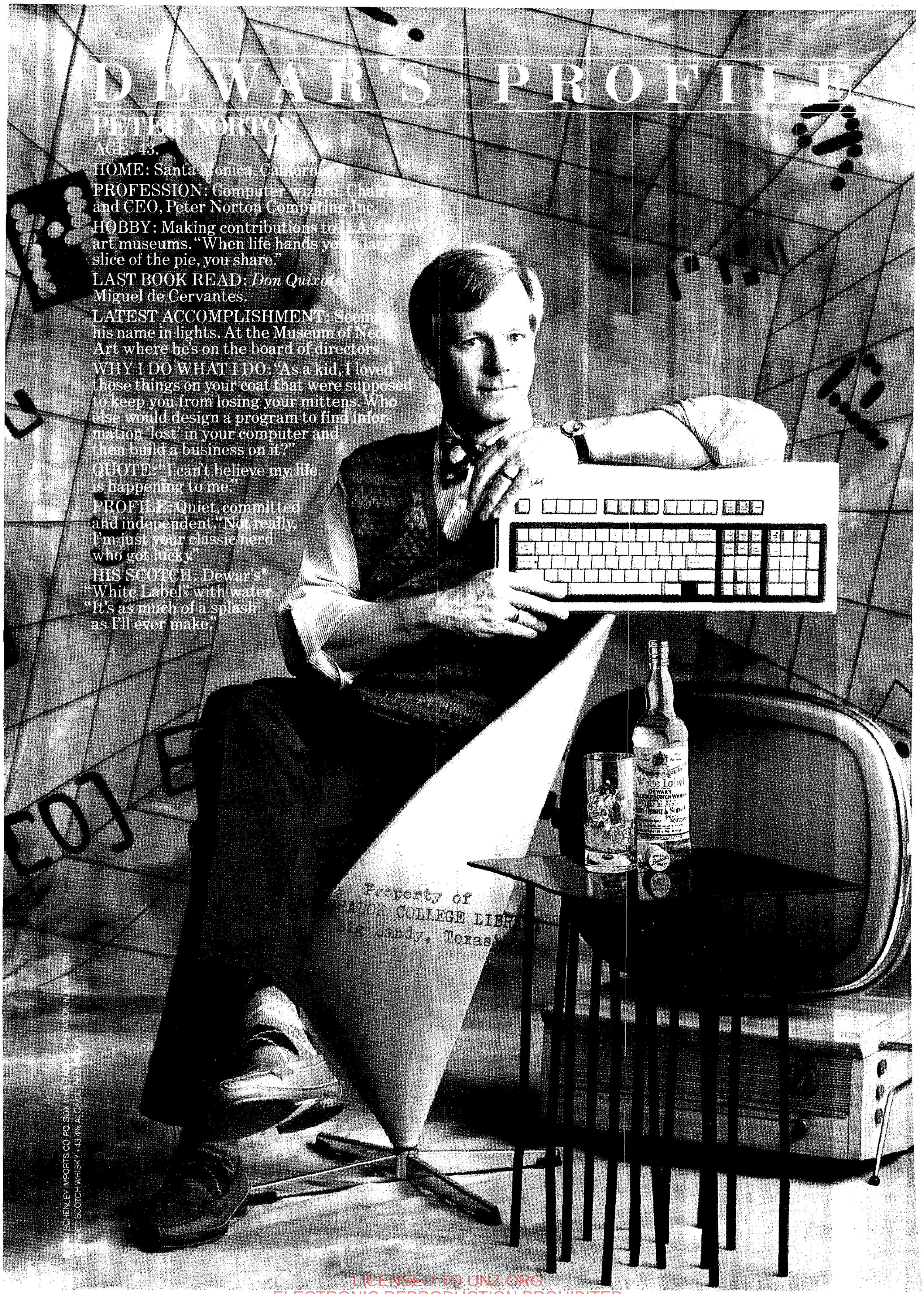

DEWAR'S PROFILE

PETER NORTON

AGE: 43.

HOME: Santa Monica, California.

PROFESSION: Computer wizard. Chairman and CEO, Peter Norton Computing Inc.

HOBBY: Making contributions to L.A.'s many art museums. "When life hands you a large slice of the pie, you share."

LAST BOOK READ: *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes.

LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Seeing his name in lights. At the Museum of Neon Art where he's on the board of directors.

WHY I DO WHAT I DO: "As a kid, I loved those things on your coat that were supposed to keep you from losing your mittens. Who else would design a program to find information 'lost' in your computer and then build a business on it?"

QUOTE: "I can't believe my life is happening to me."

PROFILE: Quiet, committed and independent. "Not really. I'm just your classic nerd who got lucky."

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